"THE SERPENT'S TONGUE," A THRILLER, NEXT WEEK

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Stealing an Angel

By Mason Ray

"YOU wouldn't dare," was the challenge of Cecil Daubeck. "Burglary is a trade. You don't understand it. And it requires nerve."

"If you infer I haven't nerve—" began Jandorf.

"Don't explode before the hammer drops, my dear boy," pacified Cecil. "And don't try to make me eat my words by exhibiting a fool's courage. Remember there's free lodging at State expense for unsuccessful thieves."

"I'd succeed," said Jandorf.

Cecil shrugged his shoulders. "Oh, have it your own way," said he.

"It's ten-thirty," commented Jandorf rising from the richly upholstered chair that added comfort to his bachelor quarters. "I'll start."

"Don't forget the Dalton Cullen ball," warned Cecil, as he methodically applied the flame of a vesta to another of Jandorf's havanas.

"Hang the Cullen ball," volleyed Jandorf, with back turned, as he abstracted a silver-mounted revolver from a sideboard and dropped it into his pocket. "I'm sick and tired of this social stunt."

"And being angled for," wickedly added Cecil. "My dear Paul, wealth has its seamy side. You, with that inherited title you scorn, are the big catch of the season. This very ball is intended as a snare. I've inside information. You're supposed to meet a certain Miss Genevieve Madden—and your fate."

"If you've repented your bet——" hinted Jandorf.

"I'm no crawfish," assured his friend. "The offer stands."

"Then I win," said Jandorf, with conviction. "At, or before, one o'clock I'll join you at the Cullens'; and in my possession will be an object of value which I shall filch from some rich man's residence between now and that hour."

"Go it," said Cecil, in the tone of one who sheds responsibility. "And if you're pinched don't squeal. At one minute past one, if you fail to materialize with the goods, I get the stakes."

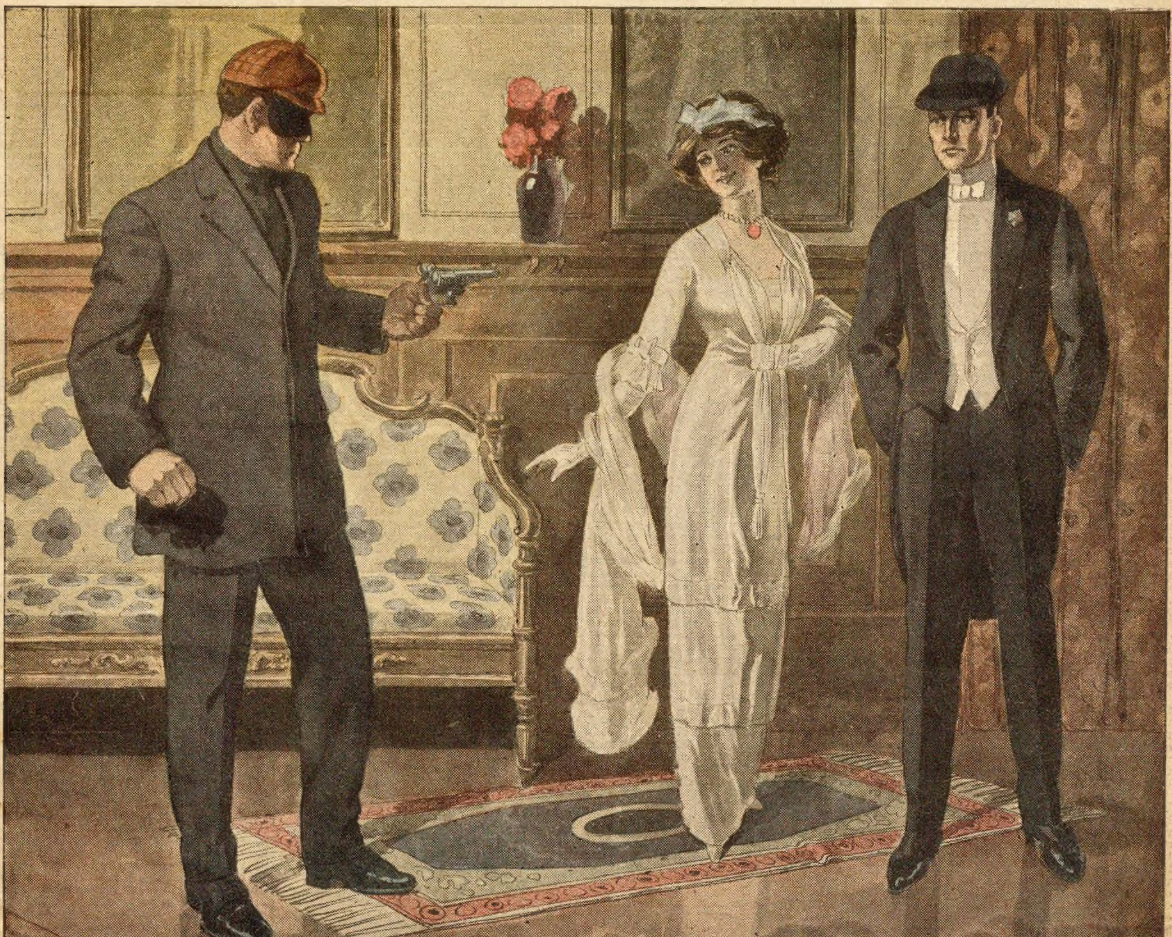
"I'll be punctual," declared Jandorf. He stepped into an adjacent apartment and donned a long, dark gray ulster that completely hid his faultless evening clothes. From a wardrobe drawer he secured a black silk visor recently worn at a masque ball, and thrust it into an inside pocket. Lastly he completed his attire by a soft gray felt hat pulled low over his fine eyes, and drew on gloves of the same hue. One article essential to his evening's adventure was still lacking. As he reentered the parlor and possessed himself of a burglar's tool that lay on the table, his massive form bulked hugely in contrast to Cecil's delicate build. His strong, handsome profile suggested Roman models in Greek sculpture.

"If you're nabbed," advised Cecil Daubeck, with an uneasy glance at the vanishing tool, "drop that jimmy like it was red-hot." He regretted that the precipitate housebreaker who had left this souvenir of his presence at the Daubeck dwelling had adopted this expedient. The illegal device, used in an illegal but dangerous calling, had given rise to the preceding discussion and foolhardy wager.

"I will," agreed Jandorf, and passed downstairs and out to the street, leaving Cecil to lock up and proceed to the ball at his leisure.

An interminable beadwork of lights extended east and west along the avenue. Like a brilliant milky way, they burned a belted area in the blackness of a cloudy night. For a time the amateur paused to consider his course. He had shot man-eaters in India and stalked elephants in their habitat, but this was new—and ill-flavored. Stalking a wild beast to its lair and jimmying his entrance into a brownstone front might equally test courage, but he preferred the former. Being a sportsman to his finger-tips, he knew nothing of retreat. Having committed himself to the winning of stakes, he would gain them in the least offensive manner. But he would win and win fairly.

As he meditated, the image of a handsome suburban villa flashed into mind. Back among riotous shrubbery he had once glimpsed an enchanting dormered dwelling. On a name plate at the iron gateway he had spelled out the word "Paradise," and had smiled at the fanciful title chosen by the owner. To steal



into Paradise caught his fancy. Besides, the grounds offered shelter for wary approach. He concluded to slip into the garage and remove his especially-built runabout. He would need it to cover the considerable distance to this out-of-town residence, and burglarizing with a motor was nothing original. The upper class of the underworld made use of fast cars, and Jandorf knew that in case of pursuit he could persuade his motor into a mile a minute. It had been designed under his supervision, and he understood intimately every part of its mechanism. Now, as he deftly extracted it from beside his big touring car and started the motor, it seemed a thing of life. With the lever at second speed he darted through the silent streets of the residence district, crossed the downtown glare, and gained the suburban highway; On either hand shade trees dropped russet foliage across his path. Presently he turned out his lights, and the dark green body of the car blended with shadows, as he finally stopped beside a dark hedge that inclosed the north side of Paradise Villa.

"If I have luck," thought he, "I'll be at the Dalton Cullen's before Cecil. He'll dawdle and smoke." By the sheltered gleam of a small electric flashlight he consulted his watch. It was exactly eleven.

"Too early," was his judgment. Investigation, however, showed that the villa was dark and apparently deserted. He concluded to force an entrance, select some expensive trifle that he could return by the morning's mail, and regain his waiting car. Unhesitatingly he followed a cross section of the hedge—intended to shut off a disillusioning view of thrifty vegetables—to the wide veranda. Despite his many days and nights in the jungle, his heart pounded furiously as he adjusted the burglar's tool to a window fastening. And as he worked, the resulting noise seemed out of all proportion to the task. He almost desisted in favor of seeking an unguarded cellar-way. Then the catch yielded and he lifted the weighted sash.

Within he felt his feet press velvet pile, and a flash from his torch revealed the appropriate furnishings of a drawingroom. Slowly he looked about for a cabinet of curios or shelf of pretty trinkets that would provide the "swag" he was to exhibit, but nothing suited his purpose. Moreover, stealing an object from the first room entered seemed too simple a proposition. His sporting instinct revolted at bagging game with so little hazard. With the footfall of an Indian man-eater he passed on into a spacious hall, half expecting to stop the shot of some vigilant member of the household. As he started to mount a wide, plush-padded stair, he suddenly recollected leaving his incriminating jimmy on the sill of the unlatched window. To return for it would encroach on precious time, so he steadily climbed until he stood on a landing that receded in a long corridor with doors at left and right. Some of these doubtless led to second-story parlors and sleeping rooms; he hesitated. No thread of light beneath showed which were occupied. To blunder into a tenanted apartment invited disaster.

Finally he chose a door at his right, and silently swung it inward. Not a breath stirred. A gleam from the torch showed a blue-walled room draped and furnished in white. It was a lady's bedroom, untenanted, but Jandorf had the grace to furiously blush and retreat. Again he turned the ornate metal knob of a door, pushed it noiselessly inward—and stood transfixed. Although no radiance escaped at the threshold, the large room before him was softly illumined with electricity that burned in opal globes. On the floor was a carpet of deep pile that seemed like a closely cut, thickly grassed lawn of softest green, and every article of the sumptuous furnishing harmonized. Bookcases, paintings, and heavy hangings nearly covered the walls, but the object that caught and held Jandorf's amazed attention was a human figure near the room's center. By a carved reading table sat a young girl with white arms thrown forward in abandon across the green baize and face hidden. Her gown was of some blue material cut square at the throat, and under the delicate fabric the girl's shoulders heaved in uncontrolled sobs, while a mass of hair like old gold tumbled either side of her bowed head and lay no the table.

As the amateur burglar hesitated on the portal, the girl's convulsive weeping wrung the listener's heart. He longed to offer consolation, but to approach the sobbing girl in the guise of a burglar was impossible. His first care had been to conceal his face under the black visor, but now he swiftly removed it, and likewise divested himself of ulster and hat. He feared the girl might take fright at his presence, yet he could not leave the room until that hysterical grief had abated. Instead of lessening, the sobs became so unbearably piteous that the intruder was led into an act of gallantry which would have amazed the intimates of the cold-blooded, heart-whole Jandorf—Jandorf who fled from the presence of women and was termed the "bachelor incorrigible." Moving to the opposite side of the table from the weeping girl, he shyly touched her hair.

"Don't," he begged. "Don't grieve like that; and please don't be frightened. I want to offer assistance."

He was aware that his interference was unpardonable; but the words committed him to further delay, for a wondering, rain-washed pair of pansy-blue eyes were lifted to his compassionate face. In the tear-flushed but beautiful countenance wonder grew into blank astonishment, yet no startled cry came from the parted lips.

"What is the matter?" insisted Jandorf. "You seem to be in trouble." His voice conveyed sympathy. She was reassured by his gentlemanly appearance, and in the level, kindly gaze of his gray eyes she found nothing to alarm. Instead, his entire personality invited confidence.

"I wanted to go to the ball," was her astonishing answer. Her cupid's bow of a mouth still trembled, and mists dimmed the eyes that seemed bits of heaven's own azure. "They all went to the Cullen ball but me. My invitation was ignored. I was inconsolable."

The Cullen ball! Jandorf almost whistled. Instead he smiled.

"And I'm here this minute," said he, "because I loathe the whole purse-proud crush."

His listener looked surprised at his renunciation.

"But it will be grand," said she. "I'd give anything to see the lights and the flowers and the throng of people and hear the heavenly music—and dance. I'm just crazy about dancing," she admitted, with a faint smile that was like a gleam of swift-passing sunlight.

"Poor child! Poor neglected little Cinderella!" said he.

"My name's Angel," she corrected; "Angel Morland." And Jandorf perceived that one very young lady had never heard the enchanting story of Cinderella and the prince, so he forthwith rectified this serious defect in her education. As Angel listened to the old fairy tale, with elbow on the table and chin cupped in the left palm, her pretty face dimpled with smiles and her deep blue eyes were a-dance.

"Lucky girl," said she, at the end. "How I wish you were a fairy godmother in disguise!"

"I might try to act the part," said he. Into his mind had flashed a bold scheme. He would take the disappointed girl to the ball himself.

"It's no use to try," said she. "You're just a common mortal come to see Cousin Genevieve. And that's no use, either," she added, frankly. "Genevieve's set her heart on capturing a swell from the East, a sort of titled person. I believe that's why I wasn't taken to the party. I heard her tell auntie, her mother, that it would be just like a satiated society man to rave over a yellow-haired chit, meaning me. The idea!"

Paul Jandorf gasped. This was adventure with a vengeance! He, the titled "catch," the satiated society man, the amateur burglar, listened to the woes of a sidetracked cousin, while Genevieve Madden, the regal beauty of a dozen seasons, wasted her evening at the Cullen ball.

"So you're related to Miss Madden," he had presence of mind to remark.

"Yes; papa, who is consul at Cadiz, and wretchedly poor, sent me here for a winter's season with my aunt—his sister," she explained. Her face clouded. This was to have been her first dip into the gay life of a metropolis, and she sat there in her old clothes, chatting with an unknown friend of the family—Genevieve's cast-off suitor, but really a very nice man. Because of his evident sympathy for herself, his being evidently jilted by her heartless cousin, and for the reason that misery loves company, Angel felt drawn to him.

"We're forgetting the ball," Jandorf reminded her. "Unfortunately, I haven't pink mice or white rats or goats, like the fairy woman, but my runabout's at the gate, and we'd better start."

Angel Morland smiled.

"Think of it," said she. "An auto in place of mice, and a gentleman fairy in evening clothes! What an up-to-the-minute version of Cinderella!"

Jandorf handed her one of his cards. "Come," said he; "let me take you to the ball. We've no time to waste."

"Oh, I wish I dared!" said the girl, wistfully. She glanced at his name and thought it seemed to suit his strong personality. That she had never heard it mentioned was not strange. She was a newcomer, and her cousin must have many friends whose names had not been spoken.

"I'll make it right with your aunt," he promised.

"But my gown," she temporized. "Genevieve had white satin and diamonds. All I have is a plain white silk. There's such a mob of us girls that papa could only manage that. Will it do?" She raised blue eyes questioningly to his face.

"It's just the thing," declared Jandorf. Until this instant his mental attitude toward the Madden's poor relation was that of pity. Pity is akin to love. That last touch of femininity tipped the scale. Jandorf was in love.

As Angel rose to pass from the room he noted her willowy grace and erect carriage. From his seat by the library table he heard her cross the corridor to the room he had invaded. Again his face burned. Then he fell to pondering the astonishing events of the last hour. It was now a trifle past eleven-thirty. Since parting with Cecil he had broken into Paradise and was about to carry off an Angel. The name fitted to a dot. He could not imagine that glorious being by any other title. No wonder Genevieve, the mature beauty, feared her rivalry.

Ten minutes thus passed, then five, and yet another five. He fancied once he heard a movement below, and thought of the unlatched window. Then, with a start, he remembered the abandoned burglar's tool on the window-sill. He must recover it and refasten the blinds. He shuddered as he reflected that the fastenings were inadequate, that Angel had been left alone in an ill-guarded house. If there were servants about they were either in a room at the rear or asleep, very soundly asleep. At that point in his reverie the door opened, revealing a transfigured Angel. From her crown of old-gold hair to her satin-slippered feet she was an exquisite vision of beauty.

"Do—do you think my gown pretty enough?" she demanded, looking with disfavor at the untrimmed skirt.

"It's stunning," Jandorf told her.

"And my hair; is it right?" she questioned.

"It couldn't be better—or half as well—if you wore a coronet," said he.

Thoughtfully she regarded her shoes. "They're getting shabby," said she.

"When we're dancing," reminded Jandorf, "you'll forget the slippers. Besides, they may turn to crystal."

"Here's my only ornament," said she, advancing and letting a string of coral drip from her extended fingers. "Fasten it about my neck and see if it looks fit."

With trembling fingers Jandorf wound the pretty trinket about her white throat as directed. The girl's yellow head was just at his chin; her warm, scented flesh came in unavoidable contact with his fumbling hands. Finally, when the clasp was made secure at the back, she whirled a pace distant for his learned inspection. From head to foot she was white as an exquisite figure in marble, save for this ornament and her shining hair. A powder puff had given the pink of her rounded cheek the downlike appearance of a sun-kissed peach. Excitement lent her long-lashed pansy-blue eyes the dancing light of twin stars.

"No," decided Jandorf, after a moment's scrutiny, "that's a false note. The rest is perfection." Mentally swearing that the next necklace she owned would be of costliest pearls, he repeated the fumbling task.

"Now, your cloak," he ordered. "Get your cloak, and we'll be off."

Snapping open his watch he noted that the hour was twelve. There was abundant time to keep his appointment. Again he heard Angel cross the corridor and return. She was now hooded and cloaked in something downy and soft. It's color was dark red.

"You'll notify one of the servants that you're going out," he suggested.

"Nothing of the kind," said she. "They'd try to interfere; especially Celeste, Cousin Genevieve's maid."

So like two guilty mortals they descended the broad stairs with Jandorf in the lead. His flashlight burned the darkness in advance. Their own figures were concealed. At the last step Jandorf's circle of flame suddenly illumined the head and shoulders of an uncouth individual waiting with poised revolver.

"You're infernally slow," muttered the man. "But I knowed you'd make a big haul upstairs, and I waited. Now, I wants my share."

Jandorf halted. There was no alternative. He was confronted by an argument that was convincing. It's mouth was iron and its last word would be of lead. Because of Angel's presence he must delay action.

"Go back!" he told her premptorily. He trusted to her wit for 'phoning the police. Evidently the intruder had not expected to deal with two. His whole attention must be directed toward Jandorf.

"I saw you bust open that winder and crawl through," menaced the tough, in a low tone. "You helped yourself to my job. The gang knew I had this crib spotted, and kept hands off, but you go butting in. Now I wants my share; cough up."

"You're mad," said Jandorf. "I'm no burglar."

"Ain't you?" taunted the yeggman. "Then what for's this jimmy? I know your sort. You're one of the swells working with a lady pal what's inside. You ride about in a gas-wagon like a lord and live at a club. You're a diamond collector; that's what you are. I bet your pockets bulge with sparklers what I'd 'a' had but for you, and now you'll split even. See?"

"Nonsense!" said Jandorf. "I'll do nothing of the sort. And as for that gun, you might as well put it up. There's nothing to be gained by alarming the servants."

Into the burglar's beady eyes crept a hesitancy of purpose. He was debating the reason for the woman's return to the second story and her puzzling delay. As for creating a disastrous noise with firearms, he was even more anxious than Jandorf to avoid notice.

"Come," he jerked out, "we're acting like fools. Gimme fifty bob and I'll call it square."

"My friend," said Jandorf, talking to fill time, "you're barking up the wrong tree. I'm not a member of your celebrated brotherhood. I'm a civilian."

"Rot!" snorted the burglar. "Whatchu giving me? Didn't I see your job, and a nifty one at that. Not your first, by a jugful. It let me in on the ground floor, but I found, same's you, that the silver's in a safe, and I needs expert help. I'd 'a' worked the next story, too, if I'd 'a' thought you'd hog——" he stopped. His trained ear had caught a faint, suspicious sound.

"Yes; it's a telephone," assured Jandorf. "My friend has notified the police that they're badly wanted. That last ring must have been an answer from headquarters. Within five minutes the police will be on the spot."

"You infernal fool!" hissed the angry yeggman.

"I have this to say," Jandorf told him; "I'm no burglar, and I can prove it, for all of that tool you found on the window. But I'm due at an appointment. I don't want to be stopped while I explain that jimmy to the law, in case they believe you. Neither do I want you blamed for my housebreaking. So now that the house will be given police protection, I propose that you and I both take French leave. Skip!"

The man glared angrily at the amateur. He had been tricked by a police call. It was a ruse of the flash porch-climber to hog the spoils and escape in his car. For a ha'penny he'd let fly at the traitor, even if he got "jugged." Then prudence outclassed an expensive vengeance, and he bolted.

"Quick!" Jandorf urged Angel, who came to him out of the darkness. "The burglar's escaped, and the rascal may annex my car."

It was but a moment's delay to unlock the hall door. Then the two quickly crossed the lawn, while Jandorf explained the exit chosen by the housebreaker, and praised his companion's presence of mind in rushing to summon aid.

"Now," said he, "we'll hike. If we're here when the police come, they'll spoil our evening. They'd question us from now till daylight."

"That would be dreadful!" cried Angel, and glanced apprehensively cityward. "They're coming!" she gasped, as she sprang into her seat. "They're mounted on motorcycles! Hurry, oh, do hurry!"

Twin points of light about two blocks distant corroborated her statement. With a last turn at the crank Jandorf jumped into the car and jerked the speed-lever. For a block he ran without light, then turned on the glare and jammed his foot down on the accelerator.

"Where are they now?" he questioned. He dared not turn, but Angel was looking back.

"One stopped at the gate. The other's only a block behind. I think he's intending to stop us. Hurry, do hurry!"

Jandorf had no doubt whatever about the officer's intentions. The two had arrived at their destination, caught sight of his fleeing motor, and decided he was the escaping burglar. One had stopped to investigate damages at the residence; the other was giving chase.

"It's the deuce of a mess," thought Jandorf. "And he's liable to chance a shot."

With set jaws he turned on all the power and shot along the quiet street like a meteor. To allow the officer to approach, after this speed, meant arrest for himself and humiliation for Angel. He would rather face death. With every sense alert he urged his car to its utmost. Everything depended on his tires holding out under the strain and having no trouble with the carbureter. A half-mile down the suburban road he would turn into a cross avenue. Another turn would put him on the Cullens' thoroughfare, and he would race to the finish.

"He's keeping within a block," Angel called above the hum of the car. Her voice was vibrant with pride in their progress. Then her sharp eyes noted that the space widened. "We're gaining!" she exulted. "Oh, we're gaining!"

She clung to his left arm with both hands, but it was not the touch of fear. She merely guarded against being swept from her seat like a scarlet leaf from a wind-tossed branch. At the first turn he was obliged to lessen his pace lest the machine skid, but immediately after entering the side avenue he threw out the clutch, and darted ahead like a Vanderbilt racer.

"He's nearly two blocks behind," Angel announced, when the mounted officer again wheeled into view. "And he's losing ground."

Jandorf made a quick decision. If he could make the second turn and reach the Cullens' before the officer sighted him, he was safe. His machine was already moving at a fearful clip, but he managed a slight increase. Then came the turn where he cut off gas and safely rounded into the last stretch. Almost two blocks ahead was their destination, with a line of waiting motors drawn up at the curb. One block was passed, then several dwellings on the next, and they were in front of the brilliantly lighted mansion. With adroit touch Jandorf sandwiched his car between two of similar build, stopped the motor, and helped his companion from her seat. Swiftly they mounted the steps and turned in the lighted hallway to glance back. The pursuing officer was not in view. Angel gave a sigh of relief and triumph.

"It was glorious!" she murmured.

"You're a brick!" said Jandorf.

He handed their wraps to an attend-

(Continued on page thirteen.)

JEALOUS OF HERSELF;

Or, Berenice's Mysterious Flight

By Agnes Dorothy Camp

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CHAPTER VIII.

IN THE anxious weeks that followed Berenice's disappearance Amabel almost hated her cousin for the trick she was playing. In spite of his assertion that he would lay hands on the guilty person in a few hours, many weeks had elapsed, and the detective was no nearer a solution of the mystery than he had been at first.

There were times when Amabel wondered whether after all she had misjudged the wilful Berenice and that something dreadful had happened. Betsey was horribly superstitious. She firmly believed that the girl had been carried up to Heaven in a chariot of fire, like the prophet of old. When questioned on the subject she could give no reason for believing that God had especially favored her young mistress, for Berenice not only refused to attend divine service on Sundays, but she insisted on a bigger dinner than usual, and lots of company to help her eat it, making it impossible for her servant to go to church.

Betsey's brother was the only one who refused to discuss the subject; after his first denial of any knowledge of his mistress he offered no theories.

"I don't believe nothing," had been his last words on the subject.

Clement Knowlton's family, unlike the Fairchilds, were ready to receive the charming actress in their family, and did everything in their power to find her. But when weeks passed and no trace of her was found, they withdrew from the unpleasant notoriety. The family sailed for Europe and remained there.

When Amabel could stand the suspense about Jerome's condition no longer, she answered Doctor Ferguson's letter, inclosing some of the newspaper accounts of Berenice's vanishing.

In her quiet loneliness she pictured him neglected, perhaps dying for want of good nursing, and she, through a wilful woman's selfishness, was helpless and powerless to go to his assistance.

One day when she thought she could stand it no longer, Amabel resolved to go back to her work nursing. Her cousin's story had almost died out except among her intimate friends. Their uncle had long ago returned to his home. Amabel resolved to lose no time. She commenced preparations. There had been another call for more nurses for the army, and she wanted to work.

She packed a small trunk of simple things, and remembering her diploma, the thing that had brought her back to Berenice's house, she commenced to look for it. As she was not sure where it had been placed, Amabel did not give up the search until every trunk, drawer, and paper had been carefully gone through. It was nowhere to be found.

Amabel could have wept with annoyance; it would mean so much delay; it was so necessary for the new work. And she renewed the search with the same results. The diploma was not to be found.

While Amabel was grieving at the possible neglect of Jerome, he was slowly returning to life and consciousness under the care of the very best nurses in the hospital.

Doctor Ferguson was unwearied in his care of the young minister. Puntos, who never seemed to sleep, was always to be found day and night at the foot of the sick man's bed, and the nurses never complained of being tired if Jerome was their patient. There was one nurse whose touch the almost dying man had learned to know from all the rest.

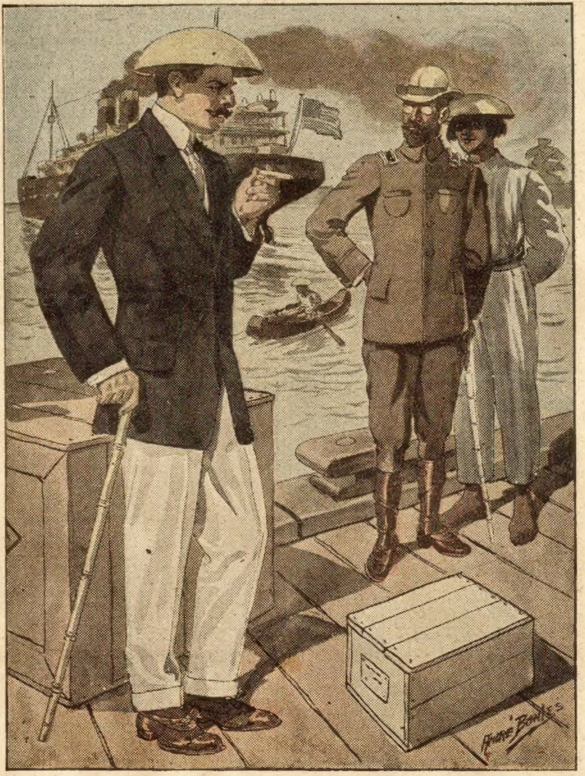
She was light of step and graceful of movement. Her voice had the power to soothe him like narcotics. She had come down to Manila on a recent transport, and in a few weeks had become a necessity to Jerome. The nurse was young and lithe of figure, her eyes soft and luminous as a fawn's. The petulant mouth seemed to belie the sweet, patient nurse. These were her only title to good looks, for though her features were good, a coarse complexion and a coarser shock of red hair thwarted her few claims to beauty.

The charm of her voice and the magic of her touch were familiar to Jerome long before his vision was clear enough to observe her disadvantages. Noticing that the young man preferred her services to those of the other nurses, Miss Bentley of the red hair begged to be allowed to do double duty, which, on account of the scarcity of attendants, was readily granted.

Both nurses and patients fell under the influence of Miss Bentley's sweet voice and charming manner. She was quite young and confessed to having only just left the hospital where she was trained. But what she lacked in experience was fully atoned for in her adaptability. Sometimes she betrayed woeful ignorance of her profession, and before the person detecting had time to evince surprise, she astonished him with some profundity that only long experience would seem to reconcile.

For a long time Miss Bentley paid no attention to Punto Puntos, which made it distinctly easy for Puntos to study the new nurse. From the first day the Filipino had noticed that she was different from the other nurses—just how he couldn't explain. He could only wonder. Much of Punto's time was taken up in wondering. His inability to speak English made it impossible for him to converse. Besides, he was too servile to presume to ask questions. The great Americanos were a never-ending source of marvel to the untutored native.

Punto never forgot the big American leaning tenderly over him as he writhed in agony from the shot wound. He could always close his eyes and hear again the gentle though masterly tones in which Jerome had ordered the poor Filipino to be carried into the hospital.



"Close shave!" he muttered.

At last Puntos thought he had solved the mystery of the "Firehead," as he called Miss Bentley in his mind. Somehow, somewhere, the brave Americano had saved her life, even as Captain Bradley had come to the rescue of the poor native. Puntos had watched her closely before arriving at this conclusion.

He observed her with other patients. While her voice was always sweet and low, it lacked the caress that hung around her every word to Jerome. Her actions, though gentle, were mechanical. Punto knew nothing of love. He saw only devotion and gratitude. And for that he was willing to kiss the ground that the Firehead walked on.

He appointed himself her guardian, and followed her around in her few walks as he had attended Jerome. Once Miss Bentley turned suddenly in her walk and saw the Filipino behind her. She called to him and spoke a few kindly words, which bound the poor native closer than ever to the wonderful Americanos.

"How's your patient this morning, Miss Bentley?" asked Doctor Ferguson, entering the room where Jerome was, slightly propped up in bed, looking like the shadow of himself.

"Oh, much better," replied the nurse, looking brightly from the Doctor to the patient, and back again to the Doctor.

"I couldn't fail to get better with such a nurse and doctor," whispered Jerome feebly.

Doctor Ferguson smiled cheerfully. "Well, you did keep us busy," he said, "but I'm proud of you, and I see you intend to be out of here in no time."

Jerome's fine eyes were abnormally large and unnaturally bright, in contrast to the wan face, as they watched the nurse and cheerful physician. But he shook his head.

"You don't believe that," he murmured.

So strange and penetrating was the glance suddenly turned upon them that they felt he must have received some vague inkling of what was in their minds. Miss Bentley turned to the window, and the Doctor noted her white, distressed face. He also saw that Jerome's eyes followed her hungrily. Truly it seemed as if she was light and life to him.

"You don't believe that I shall soon be out of here," Jerome repeated. "Really, you expect me to die. I thought for a long time that I should—until she came. But now I couldn't die of a hundred wounds, if she were near me. But I can never get well again."

His weakness was pitiful.

"Come, Jerome," said the Doctor, firmly, trying to transmit some of his own strengtn and energy into the weakened man. "Your hopelessness is chilling. We want to see results of treatment and nursing. All craftsmen do. Miss Bentley feels you are not progressing under her care, and suggests another nurse."

This was a bold stroke from the physician, and it had the desired effect. At first he was frightened by the white, haggard look of Jerome's face, but later in the day he began to fathom the sick man's wonderful fortitude.

Doctor and nurse met outside the door. "Is he really better?" she asked anxiously, "or were you just——" She broke down with a little sob.

The Doctor glanced over his shoulder and all around before replying.

"Frankly, Miss———Bentley," he said in lowered tones, "he's better off than you are. He is mending fast, and you are verging on collapse——"

"No, no!" she interrupted. "I'm quite well, but he has brightened up so in the last few hours I'm frightened."

"He's putting up a magnificent fight and coming out with flying colors; but you are making a botch of your work after such a brilliant start. We have persuaded a few people to believe what we want them to believe, and by staying with Jerome almost exclusively your incompetence has not been discovered. But if you break down now, it will be a reflection on me. I command you, therefore, to rest and eat, or I'll send you back where you came from, bag and baggage—you understand?"

She smiled faintly. "I will do whatever you say, but first I'll run and see if he needs anything before I go to rest," she explained.

"You'll do nothing of the kind," he declared. "I'll stay with him a while, and you rest for four hours. Now, go."

Miss Bentley glanced timidly at the half-serious, half-smiling face of the good-natured Doctor, and hurried in the direction of her room.

CHAPTER IX.

For weeks Amabel oscillated between her belief that Berenice was playing a trick or that something serious had befallen her. No mood of Berenice's had ever lasted so long before she reasoned with herself. The girl was changeable as the wind. She could laugh or cry at will, and forget her anger before it was really known that she was angry.

Amabel could not recall any time when her cousin had remained in the same mood twenty-four hours. How, then, could she keep up this deathly silence and skilfully elude detection. There was still a tempting reward for information as to the whereabouts of the actress. Although Clement Knowlton had withdrawn, Berenice's uncle was as keen as at first to discover his niece.

Hawk, though he seemed to have relinquished all hope of securing the actress as an adjunct to his income, had latterly shown a sincere interest in her reappearance.

Amabel recalled the look and tones of Berenice in that last interview. She bitterly regretted her hard words to the poor little thing. And they must have been hard and cruel, for Berenice refused to make up. The only time that Berenice was not ready to make up—oh, how well she remembered the flashing eyes and the passionate words!

It could not be possible that her cousin loved Jerome Fairchild, after all. If so, why did she engage herself to Celement Knowlton? It was all Hawk's fault. He wanted to part her and Jerome effectively, and then watch his opportunity to separate her from Knowlton—the wicked schemer! But how he worked it puzzled Amabel.

The trick that Hawk played was no trick at all. He simply used an opportunity. Knowlton saw Berenice from a box in the theater. He sought out Hawk and requested an introduction. In a little while the cousins and Knowlton became good friends, and later the young man proposed to Berenice.

Acting on a hint from Hawk, Knowlton lost no time in introducing Berenice to his family. Mrs. Knowlton, whose combined family was twice as old as the Fairchilds, was a generous and broad-minded woman. She received her son's choice and made the best and most of it. This was a never-ending argument with Hawk. He constantly reminded Berenice of the attitude of the two families, until the poor child felt that she had indeed been treated badly by Jerome's family.

Amabel reviewed all this for the ninety-ninth time, as she chafed under the delay in getting an appointment to renew her labors as nurse.

One day she sat staring drowsily at a gas-log fire which was burning as cheerfully and infinitely clearer than a real log. Amabel had few callers, and none were due, so she looked up interestedly when the bell rang.

Presently Betsey announced in awed tones, "Mr. Waters."

Amabel jumped up. She had not received a call from the detective for a long time. Now she fancied he must have some real news at last. She received the visitor kindly. They had met several times since that first day when Amabel returned from the country and found her cousin gone.

While the man was as sure as at first that Amabel was concealing something that would be of assistance in his search, he had decided that she knew nothing of her cousin's whereabouts.

"Sit down, Mr. Waters," said Amabel, offering him a chair. "I see you have news at last."

The detective took the chair and placed it where his face would be in the shadow, but where he could command a good view of the girl's speaking features.

"Then I don't know my business," he chuckled, "for a detective is supposed to conceal his discoveries until he's ready to disclose them."

Amabel smiled sweetly.

"Then I conclude that you have come to tell me what you have found out, proving by your readiness that you know your business beyond a doubt."

The big man chuckled again.

"That's clever of you, Miss Marther," he said. "And to be quite frank, I have found out something. But how would it be for us to exchange ideas?"

Amabel looked less friendly.

"Suppose," Waters continued, "that you tell me what you have withheld, and I'll tell you what I've discovered."

Amabel was silent, her brow contracted.

"If I give you a little bit of a start, will you tell me the rest?" he asked, in coaxing tones.

Amabel's face flushed.

"What makes you think I'm withholding something," she evaded. "Now, come, what have you found out about my cousin?"

"Now, there you go again," he wheedled. "You're too smart for me. You answer my question with another. Now, to refresh our memory, let's go over the facts as we know them. You and your cousin had a violent quarrel on a certain Tuesday."

"It was not a violent quarrel," protested Amabel. But the man went on without noticing the interruption.

"You packed a suitcase and were hurrying away from the house," he said. "Nobody would have known anything about it, only the servant happened to be in the hall and let you out. After that your cousin was never seen. We remember what the servant said, and also that Hawk, finding she was late for the theater, telephoned. As she was not at home he called up Knowlton.

"Knowlton, knowing nothing about her, called up some intimate friends, and came to the house. Later Hawk came. The two decided that there was something suspicious, and sent for me. Knowlton was in favor of keeping it quiet, but Hawk couldn't resist a little press notice, so it all came out in the big headlines. I telephoned and telegraphed to you up the State, and finally sent a man. Before he had time to get there, you walked in without knowing a thing about it. It that right so far?"

Amabel nodded her head.

"Now, so far as you know, nothing was missing from her wardrobe or yours. She couldn't be carried out of here without the servant seeing or hearing. She couldn't have gone out without clothes; that would have attracted attention. She must have bought some new clothing."

"If she went away as a result of our misunderstanding, she didn't have time to buy anything," answered Amabel.

"Exactly. Try and remember what you did with the black coat with a Persian lamb collar you wore three winters ago."

Amabel looked aghast.

"I don't know," she said.

The detective looked delighted at her perturbation.

"You must try and think," he said. "A woman answering to Miss Berenice's description left this house at half-past six o'clock on that Tuesday evening. She wore a long black coat, the one I fancy that you wore back and forth to the theater three years ago."

Amabel recalled that the coat had been put in the storeroom, because moths had got in it. But what could have induced Berenice to masquerade in it? Amabel looked wonderingly at the detective. The man smiled confidently.

"Now, Miss Marther," he said, "if I tell you whom you quarreled about, will you tell me why you quarreled?"

Amabel knew that the man had talked again with Hawk and got additional information concerning Jerome. But Hawk nor any other person could possibly know what had passed between her and Berenice, unless she chose to tell him.

"Well?" she said.

"I see you're not going to help me," he said, comfortably; "so I'll help you. Well, you and your cousin quarreled over Mr. Jerome Fairchild. Miss Berenice was engaged to him, and his parents weren't willing to receive her into the family, and sent him away in hopes of weaning him from his fancy. Am I right, so far?"

Amabel nodded affirmatively.

"Then Mr. Knowlton happened along," continued the detective, and Miss Berenice became engaged to him. She made one mistake, though; she overlooked the importance of 'being off with the old love before you are on with the new.' "

The detective paused. Amabel's lips twitched nervously. But she made no reply, and the man proceeded.

"Mr. Fairchild fell ill in the Philippines, and Miss Marther experienced a change of heart, as the saying is, and hurried out to Manila to her lover disguised as a nurse."

Amabel's cheeks flushed and her eyes flashed indignantly.

"Impossible!" she asseverated.

But a second later she dropped back into her chair, pale and thoughtful. Again she recalled that last look on Berenice's face, and the passionate tones in her voice. Then the missing diploma, and no further news from the Philippines. Everything pointed to the truth of the detective's words. But could Berenice go through such a strategic movement unaided? If so, she had more backbone than her friends gave her credit for. These and a dozen other thoughts played tag through Amabel Marther's brain, and the mindful Waters watched the changing expressions as they reflected on the sweet, troubled face.

"What else have you discovered?" Amabel asked, at last, a slight tremble in her voice.

"I've a clean bill of health of all her movements from the time she left this house until she sailed from these shores for the Philippine Islands; but—I've lost her"—a note of disappointment crept into his tone. "Here's a message from the doctor in charge at the Manila hospital, where young Fairchild is a patient, and he knows of none answering her description."

Amabel hardly knew whether to be glad or sorry. She reached for the message. It was signed "C. Ferguson." A blaze of understanding illuminated the girl's face, to the further bewilderment of the detective.

"Do you know this doctor?" he asked.

"I never saw him in my life," replied Amabel, determined to out-detective the man.

"Then you've heard about him," insisted Waters, resolved if possible to account for the glad smile radiating her face.

Amabel smiled tantalizingly, but she answered truthfully: "I've never heard his name mentioned until now."

Waters was puzzled. He had learned nothing, and he saw that whatever his words might have suggested to the girl, she was not going to give him the benefit of them. He changed his tactics.

"I've not made my discoveries known to Hawk," he said, blandly, "not knowing whether you'd care for more headlines, if your cousin is really going to marry Mr. Fairchild after all."

"Don't do it," she said, hastily; "please don't do it. If you have proof that my cousin left this house of her own free will, and you've followed her movements up to the time that she sailed for the Philippines, my uncle will gladly give the promised reward without further publicity."

The detective watched the flushed face keenly. Amabel took a coaxing tone.

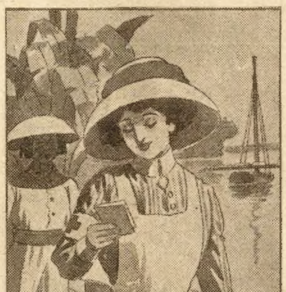
"You see," she explained, "if my cousin is with Mr. Fairchild, they've made up and are probably married. So the headlines will not do Mr. Hawk any good, and will cause us a lot of annoyance."

The slight drift of independence mingling with the earnest words showed that Amabel wasn't thinking of bribery. Waters was a true born American and admired her all the more.

"She's a game little sport," he thought, "and ought to be in the diplomatic service." Aloud he said: "All right, Miss Marther. As the laborer is worthy of his hire, I gratefully accept what your uncle offers for my services, and hope to be of further assistance."

Amabel's equanimity was completely restored. She smiled cheerfully.

"I'll write to my uncle at once," she said.



He followed her around.

Waters thanked her and picked up his hat. When his hand was on the doorknob he looked back at the frail girl standing before the gas-log fire. Then he said good day and hurried from the house.

"Business is business," he muttered, "and my business is to battle with sharp folk with only my wits for a weapon. But I'll be darned if I'm going to use them on that little girl; she's too good. The other one is made of good stuff, too."

Waters pulled on his gloves and buttoned his overcoat up to the ears. The sun had gone down, leaving a cold, raw wind.

"Well, well," he chuckled. "I wonder what she'd have said if I had told her I had found out that she had her papers signed and had secured a post as nurse at the Manila hospital. In short, that I know that she is fully acquainted with the whereabouts of her cousin, and is going to join her. Well, well! It's no use to upset the poor kid, so long as I collect the remuneration. Business is business."

While these sentiments did credit to the goodness of the detective's heart, the reader knows how he misjudged Amabel. In her wildest moments she had never dreamed of such a thing. She had pictured her cousin in a convent and in a half-dozen other ridiculous situations, but never this.

She laughed gleefully at the thought of Doctor Ferguson's cleverness, and from that moment he became a hero in her thoughts. Of course, Berenice had taken him into her confidence. How could she have stayed otherwise?

Amabel wrote a letter to her uncle, telling him of her discoveries and advising him to pay the detective, and to keep the good news absolutely quiet. Two days later she sailed for the Philippines to meet her cousin and her fate.

CHAPTER X.

As Amabel was straining her eyes for the last look of New York, Doctor Ferguson and Miss Bentley, the nurse who had proved so efficient in nursing Jerome Fairchild back to life and health, stood on the deck of a homeward-bound vessel.

The usual bustle pertaining to a departing ship was in progress. Those not going were shouting messages to the friends at home. The homegoers called back encouragement to the companions left behind. And mingling with these was the good-natured clamor of the deck hands hurrying on the last mail and belated baggage.

Ferguson stood with one foot on the gang-plank ready to leave the boat at the last bell, and his erstwhile associate gazed wistfully over his shoulder in the direction of the hospital building. Her face was thin, and there were dark lines under the beautiful eyes, telling dumbly of the days and nights of anxious nursing.

"You've assured me, Doctor, that my leaving Jerome will not put him back," she said, wearily, "and I must trust the rest to Providence."

There were tears in her voice, and Doctor Ferguson looked pityingly at the fragile little figure that had endured so much.

"Don't worry about him," said the Doctor, encouragingly. "Fairchild is getting along swimmingly, thanks to you. Now you must get your cousin to nurse you back to your old self."

The girl sighed heavily.

"It won't make any difference now," she said, dejectedly. "Jerome loves Nurse Bentley. He will never again even inquire about Berenice Marther. He has forgotten me as though I had never existed."

Ferguson looked as though he would give anything to tell her what was in his mind, but he only said:

"Jerome loved Nurse Bentley only because she reminded him of Berenice Marther."

Berenice—for of course the reader has recognized the charming actress in spite of her disguise—clasped her hands nervously.

"If only I could think so," she murmured sadly.

"I'm sorry you didn't take my advice and stay with him," declared the physician. "He will be able to return to the States in a month, or perhaps, six weeks——"

"Impossible!" she interrupted. "He promised his parents that he wouldn't see me for a year. He must keep his word to them. I should never forgive myself if he didn't. He has never seen Berenice Marther. But he has said things to Nurse Bentley that makes me jealous of her. I'm running away from myself; I daren't trust myself any longer. I repeat, all I can do is to return home and trust to Providence—and you—to keep my secret."

"Where will you go and what will you do?" he asked.

"I shall go to my uncle and stay until Jerome comes," she answered. "The sleuths will have given up looking for me."

"That's just what I should have advised," said the Doctor. "It's your best course, and one that Jerome would approve."

"Yes," she said, mournfully, "and you'll give him my letter explaining why I was called away? And, ah, Doctor," she exclaimed, "here comes poor Punto Puntos laden with flowers."

The poor native had traveled miles to find the choicest perfumed and most gorgeous blooms the islands produced. In one hand he carried a big basket of oranges, streaked with green and nearly covered with their own fresh foliage. He presented them to the girl and stood mutely, adoringly, gazing into her face.

"Oh, you good, kind Punto!" cried Berenice, her eyes filling with tears. "How can I thank you?" Quick as a flash she took from her wrist a plain gold bangle, and bending low, presented it to the Filipino.

"God bless you!" she said. "Help Doctor Ferguson to take care of Mr. Fairchild."

To her dying day Berenice never forgot the delirious joy that shone on the poor native's face.

"I shall remember," was all he could utter.

Doctor Ferguson had been a silent spectator of the little drama.

"I'd like to see her without that disguise," he thought.

And now the last piece of luggage was aboard. The sailors rushed around, tied and untied knots, loosened ropes and tightened others. The bell rang and a whistle blew, and the few remaining loungers hustled down the gang-plank.

Chains rattled and machinery groaned ominously, but whoever at such a time listens to a croaker? Whether it's a timid passenger or a squeaking, wailing screw, everybody is excited. Men wave their hats, and the women's handkerchiefs flutter in the breeze. The Stars and Stripes are waved by the few who are fortunate enough to have the precious emblem.

Berenice had brightened up considerably in the last few minutes, and now leaned over the ship's rail and waved a tiny flag in her old airy fashion to Doctor Ferguson and Punto, who stood respectfully behind the Doctor.

Suddenly the little hand went down and hung weakly at her side, and the smiling eyes became large with fright. The two men turned to see the cause, for Berenice was looking beyond them. They saw a man pushing his way through the bystanders. Just then the gang-plank was drawn in, and the whistle gave a final screech, as though it was jeering at the disappointed traveler.

"Caramba," muttered the would-be passenger; and Ferguson recognized Celasquex.

The Spaniard beckoned frantically to an officer on board. But though he cursed in half a dozen languages culled from several continents, the vessel glided slowly but surely farther and farther from the shore.

Ferguson, meeting the Spaniard's eye could not resist an aggravating grin at the impotent rage of the defeated villain. He turned once more to the departing ship. Berenice was still leaning over the rail, vigorously waving her little flag. Puntos kotowed in a fashion all his own to the vanishing boat, and Ferguson waved his hat.

"A close shave," he muttered, watching the retreating figure of Celasquex. "Another moment and he'd have been her fellow passenger. Doesn't appear to have made any preparations for the journey—no baggage, lounging suit, etc. Can it be that he just recognized her; or have they met? Wish she was here; I'd ask her."

Suddenly remembering that Punto was her shadow, he turned to the native.

"Is Celasquex a friend of Miss Bentley?" he asked carelessly.

Puntos shook his head.

"Celasquex has just returned from a five days' journey," he replied. "He has been in the palace behind the hills since the attack on Senor Fairchild."

"I thought he was something of a rebel leader. A strong man?"

"Strong, but not brave," declared Puntos. "He has a large following, but he can stay in the shade and pull the strings."

"Then you don't think he knows Miss Bentley?" asked Ferguson, eying the keen Filipino admiringly.

"He knows her. I saw him recognize her," said Puntos, "just as the boat was starting. That's why he wanted to get aboard. I'm glad he missed it. He's a bad man."

Ferguson only needed confirmation of his own opinion. So he said:

"Miss Bentley recognized Celasquex, didn't she?"

"Yes, and she was very much frightened, and very glad he didn't get aboard. He's a very bad man," repeated Puntos.

"We'll fix him yet, Puntos," said Ferguson, incautiously.

The Doctor's words seemed to have fanned a dormant flame smoldering in the native's breast.

"Yes, we'll fix him yet!" he whispered threateningly.

This capital story will be continued in the next issue of the Ledger. During the coming months many great stories will appear in these columns. If you are not already a subscriber for this paper, it will repay you if you send in a year's subscription. It costs you only $1.00, and you will never regret it. Let us hear from you at once.

* * *

According to Schedule.

William T. Lewis, the well-known automobilist, was talking lately about the 25,000-mile automobile trip he had just made in Europe.

"One sees Europe in an automobile," he said. "One really sees it. Some tourists don't, you know.

"Once, in Florence, I was standing on the bridge over the Arno, drinking in the beauty of the old Italian city, when a half-dozen American tourists drew near at a quick walk.

"They hurried by me, every now and then consulting their watches, and, as they passed, I overheard this conversation:

" 'Well, Florence is all right, sure!'

" 'Florence?'

" 'Why, yes! This is Florence, ain't it?'

" 'Of course not. This is Venice.'

" 'Oh, go on! It's Monday, anyhow, and Monday's Florence; Wednesday's Venice.' "

Yost Middleton's Wife;

Or, A WELL KEPT SECRET

By T. C. HARBAUGH

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CHAPTER V.

THE FACE IN THE CAB.

"WHY have you done this, child? This man belonged to me!" Lemora the beautiful stared at Edith Middleton, wondering if she had heard aright. The man on the floor did not stir. The girl's gaze wandered to the weapon which she had flashed in his face when she found herself succumbing to the mysterious powers he possessed. Slowly then her eyes wandered back to Edith.

Mrs. Middleton bent over the figure before her. Lemora saw her regard the upturned features searchingly for half a minute.

"This is the man," she said, allowing her gaze to seek the breathless girl poised in the middle of the room.

"The man, mamma? I don't quite understand. I—I——"

"Never mind," broke in Yost Middleton's wife. "Leave me alone with the body for a few moments."

With a last look at the still object and with her wonderment unsatisfied, Lemora slipped from the room and flung herself upon a couch in her own apartments. What if some one had heard the shot? There would be excitement, exposure, the police, and a charge of murder. And all this would involve Edith, drag her into the light, when it was her desire to escape publicity. Why had she shot the man at all?

Suddenly the door opened, and Lemora, looking up, beheld her foster mother bending over the top of a dresser at one side of the chamber.

"I don't blame you, child," she said, when she noticed the questioning look in the girl's eyes. "You must have had cause. Tell me."

Edith came over and sat on the side of the couch. Lemora told her story in few words. Not a word fell from Edith's lips till the last word was spoken.

"He did not identify himself" was all she asked.

"He refused to do this," Lemora answered. "I would not have shot him but for fear of falling into his hands unconscious. I never saw the man before. Is he there yet?" The girl shuddered.

"He is there, but he must not remain."

"As yet the authorities do not know," Mrs. Middleton smiled. "Money will do anything in this wicked city. This man must be attended to."

Mrs. Middleton swept out of the room, leaving Lemora alone with her thoughts and the mystery. All at once the door flew open. The young girl, half rising from the couch, saw the white face of Edith, who had sprung into the chamber gasping with alarm.

"What is it, mamma?"

"The man is gone!"

Lemora was on her feet in a flash.

"What, the man I shot?" she cried. "I thought he was dead!"

Edith's hand encircled Lemora's wrist, and the next instant the girl was being dragged from the apartment.

"You shall see for yourself," was almost shrieked into her ear. "I thought him dead, for there was a blood spot in the center of his forehead and death was surely on his face. But you shall see, child."

Across the threshold of the chamber of terrors Lemora was ruthlessly drawn, and the finger of Mrs. Middleton pointed at the spot where the body had lain. It was gone. Wife and maiden stood like statues on the rich carpet and stared in silence at the vacant place. The new mystery was too deep for words.

"Perhaps, after all, I did not slay," said Lemora, the first to speak, and a feeling of relief surged through every part of her being.

"But the crimson mark in the center of the forehead," persisted Mrs. Middleton. "Your bullet went straight to the mark, my dear. That was the man of all living beings whom I wanted. But he is gone!"

The two stood speechless for some time under the brilliant light and stared at the spot where the man should still have been.

"If he was taken away—began Lemora, when the grip at her wrist suddenly tightened.

"Who would take him away?" cried Edith. "Who had a right to invade this room without our consent?"

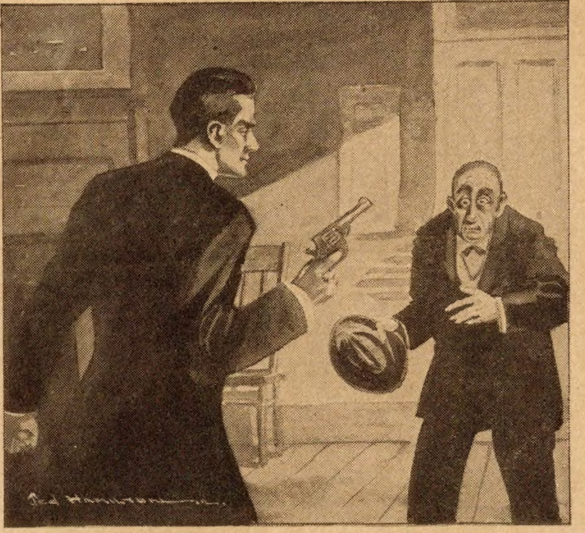
The trembling girl was dumb.

"Wait!"

Lemora heard the flying feet of Edith on the stair beyond the door. At the foot of the flight she found a man on guard. She drew him to one side and thrust some bank notes into his hand.

"How long have you been here, Jules?" she asked in French.

"Since four o'clock, madame."



"You are never to leave this room alive!"

"You have not left your post, not for a single minute?"

"No, madame."

"Did any one come down the stairs awhile ago?"

"Yes, madame, a gentleman, an American, I should say."

Edith Middleton started and felt her heart beat faster.

"Did you see his face, Jules?"

The guard nodded.

"Well?"

"A handkerchief was bound about monsieur's head, madame," was the response.

"Good! Thank Heaven!" welled from Edith Middleton's heart, and as she turned away she cried: "Fate still reserves him for me. I thank thee, Heaven, that his blood is not on the dear child's soul."

She went back to Lemora, and drawing her to her bosom, kissed her and imparted the information which she had obtained from Jules, the guard.

"I am glad, mamma," cried Lemora, "but if that man was your bitter foe, I shall regret that I did not kill him."

"No, no, child! You do not know and you shall not till all the dark threads are in my hands."

Suddenly releasing Lemora, Mrs. Middleton sprang across the room and stared at a little cabinet whose door stood slightly ajar. Lemora saw her open the door and bend eagerly forward.

"They are safe!" she heard Mrs. Middleton exclaim, as she took from the cabinet a small black jewel box which she opened with bated breath. "No, no, not all!" she wailed, tottering back. "The one thing I treasure most is gone."

The box seemed about to fall from the wife's hands. Edith dropped into a chair and showed Lemora a face seamed with torture.

"What is missing, mamma?" exclaimed Lemora, springing to Edith's side. "What did the wretch carry off?"

"My wedding ring," groaned Mrs. Middleton. "He must have known that I had not parted with it. Now the hunt begins anew!"

Edith rose to her feet with fire flashing from beneath her long silken lashes. Her hands were clinched till the pink nails seemed to disappear beneath the palms.

"Don't question me, child. I know you must be overexcited and unstrung. There, take my kiss and go to bed. But the young girl lingered.

"You must go," persisted Edith. "The man will not come back. Angels will guard you, my dear," and Lemora, still gently protesting, was led from the room to her own chamber adjoining that of Edith's.

Mrs. Middleton went back to the little parlor. She wheeled a chair to the table and ensconsed herself in it. Her beautiful face was still white and drawn. The dark eyes were unnaturally bright.

"What audacity!" fell from her tongue. "What a devil! So he has pierced my mask. So he has found us out. And of all men that one, who made me a disowned wife with a secret. What he intends to do with the ring only God and the villain know. If Mason were here—but why ask for him who may be buried ere this in some secret spot where I can never drop a tear in all my misery."

She rose at last and went to the window. The street below was well lighted. Several cabs passed, and a lot of half-tipsy men on their way home from some resort. The woman's face remained adamant, till all at once she drew back and stared at a cab which had just rolled to the curb.

It was no wonder that she started as she gazed at the vehicle the door of which had opened a trifle, for by the light she saw an upturned face whose eyes seemed to have singled out the very window at which she stood.

"He has changed!" she cried, pressing her hands to her heaving bosom. "My God, Yost, you have altered! Do you think we are here? Do you want your wife, the woman who still adores you, but who must keep her secret, though it keeps wide the gulf between us?" The cab door closed, and the vehicle turned into the street proper. Edith Middleton held out her hands imploringly. "Yost! Yost! my husband!" she cried. "Would to God I had never been born! Why did we meet, love, and wed? Why did this crime come between us? Yost! Yost!"

The vision of that haggard face was gone. The rattling cab had passed out of sight.

"I had hoped never to think of assistance," she resumed, a moment later, as her excitement ebbed. "I had thought to solve this mystery all alone and prove him innocent by finding the murderer. Unmasked by the man whom Lemora shot, and dogged, as I am convinced, by the villain Stokes, I must have help."

She went to the table and took from a card case a bit of pasteboard which she examined in the light.

"I will sleep over this," she said aloud, as she read the legend on the card: "Girard Legeorge, Detective. American business solicited. 293 Rue des Tempes." And then she held out her white hands again. "Yost! Yost, my love! Some time, perhaps, but not now! not now!" and she stood erect, the personification of determination and vengeance.

CHAPTER VI.

STOKES MEETS HIS MATCH.

The cab which Mrs. Middleton had seen from her window in the Hotel Pictus drove leisurely away. A man leaned back in its depths with half-closed eyes. If Yost Middleton believed that he had tracked his wife and Lemora down, he made no sign. If his heart yearned for the woman whom he had driven from him a year before, his hard set face did not indicate it.

The vehicle jolted out of one street and into another. The man inside did not move. At length the wheels turned toward the curb, and Middleton got out. It was not his hotel. He was in a street which was neither fashionable nor over-clean.

For a moment he looked at the houses that confronted him, and selecting one, advanced to it and rang. The concierge, half-asleep at his post, shook himself into wakefulness and admitted him. Middleton spoke a name and the man nodded.

"Second floor, monsieur, first room to the right, fronts on the street."

Edith's husband paid a coin for this information, and bounded up the flight of narrow steps. The indicated door soon stood before him. He knocked. There was no response, and he was laying his hand on the knob when a voice accosted him. Middleton turned and came face to face with a dwarfish woman who leered at him with a pair of fishy eyes.

"Monsieur is out," said the dame.

"Then I'll go in and wait for him!"

Without waiting for permission Middleton turned the knob and entered the chamber beyond.

It was darkened but for a dim light that came up from the street below, and faintly revealed the plain appointments of the place. Middleton coolly took a chair, and then looked at a small but dangerous-looking revolver which he carried. He waited a full hour. The house grew strangely still. The neighborhood was not a busy one.

"It's his den all right," he said to himself more than once. "It is Stokes all over."

He had turned his chair so as to face the one door of the room. No one could enter without being seen. At length footfalls fell upon Middleton's ears. The man was coming back, his old valet and spy whom he had not seen for months. The portals swung ajar gingerly. The angular face of Stokes, not much changed, appeared at the threshold, but his keen eyes beheld his unsummoned visitor. Yost Middleton held the cocked weapon in his hand. He saw Barry Stokes flinch.

"Come in," he said, in tones of command. "You used not to be so timid."

The revolver covered the face in the doorway, and its owner saw this. In another moment he stood face to face with his old master.

"Didn't look for me, eh, Stokes?" grinned Middleton, half-maliciously, and it seemed to do him good to see Stokes wince.

The ex-valet mustered some courage at the expense of his fears and came forward.

"Sit down, Stokes," resumed Middleton. "There's a chair yonder. Pull it up and face me. There, that's it," as Stokes sat down. "You still go out nights, I see?"

The man's first effort to speak was a dismal failure. His eyes were not upon Middleton, but upon the weapon which he coolly handled.

"One must go out sometimes," he managed to stammer, at last. "Even in Paris," he added.

"Yes. How are you coming on?"

Stokes might have thought of the two thousand francs which he had but lately taken from Blake Abernathy.

"I'm doing fairly well, thanks," said he.

"Glad to hear it. Have you found a good job?"

"A fair one."

"It's a little singular, perhaps one might call it a coincidence," pursued Middleton, playing with his man as a cat plays with a captive mouse. Stokes managed to say that he didn't quite understand, though his demeanor proclaimed that he lied.

"I won't talk in riddles," said Middleton. "You have found them."

"I'll admit that I have."

"You haven't lost sight of them since they left America."

"I've happened to run across them. They've been on the go a good deal."

"Yes. Where are they now?"

"At the Hotel Pictus."

Middleton nodded at the confirmation of his suspicions.

"And the man, Mason Marx?"

Stokes held his breath in order to fully pull himself together. If Middleton would only put up that dangerous-looking thing he held in his hand with the muzzle pointed directly at his (Stokes') breast, he would feel more at his ease.

"You heard me, Stokes? When you were in my service you were noted for your hearing."

"I heard you, sir."

"Well, where is Mason Marx?"

"Last I saw of him was in Florence."

"When was that?"

"Three months since."

"It is not ninety days' journey from Florence to Paris," commented Yost Middleton.

"That is true."

"Now, Stokes, tell me the truth. Didn't you lie to me about my—about Edith?"

"I?—I?——"

"Yes, didn't you bring me more than one false report about her and that man?"

"No, sir."

"Where was Edith when you saw Mason Marx in Florence?"

"She was in Florence also."

Middleton bit his lip and seemed to quiver.

"They met there, did they?"

"Yes, sir."

"Don't lie to me, Stokes!" and the words were tinctured with a terrible threat.

"Why should I lie?"

"Stokes!" and the weapon moved a little higher till it was on a level with the ex-valet's head. "You've been dogging her."

The man winced under the straightforward charge.

"Upon my soul——"

"Men of your stamp don't have much soul," shot Middleton into the fellow's teeth. "What is your mission?"

Stokes lied with deliberation.

"I thought as how you might want to know of her whereabouts some day, and I thought I would put myself in a position to enlighten you," he said. "You, I knew, were on the Continent."

"You had no other motive?" snarled Middleton.

"None other in the world."

Edith's husband was silent for a minute.

"Look here, Stokes. Do you think my —Edith will ever give Lemora to you?"

The man opposite Middleton put on a look of amazement.

"What's that?"

"I needn't repeat," snapped Middleton. "Whatever Edith has done, she is no fool. You can't play out your devilish hand."

"I never thought of such a thing," asseverated Stokes. "The girl, as you know——"

"I ought to kill you, Stokes!" broke in Middleton, rising and standing over the man in the chair. "If ever you attempt to play your hand I will."

There was no reply.

"Have you ever attempted to guess the secret Edith withheld from me?" continued Middleton, with a show of softening.

"It's beyond my comprehension."

"But it concerns Mason Marx, the man who was charged with murder in New York?"

"I have thought it might be."

"Curse you, you know!" cried Middleton. "Tell the truth, or I'll send your soul unshriven this moment into the presence of your Maker."

There was doom, terrible doom, in the apparance of the man who towered like a giant before Stokes. The ex-valet turned different colors in the space of a fleeting second.

"Her secret is connected with this man Marx?"

"It is."

"That's better," smiled Middleton. "Now, what is the secret?"

Stokes held up his hand to give emphasis to his coming denial.

"Your wife shares no secrets with me," he said, boldly. "Before my Maker, I don't know what that secret is."

"Does my wife believe that he was innocent of the charge brought against him?"

"She does. I know that much."

The weapon dropped from its dangerous position, and Stokes took on a new lease of life.

"That is all. Now, Stokes, if you ever play your hand for the possession of Lemora, I'll kill you like a dog, if I have to pursue you to the shadow of the Pyramids! Good night."

Stokes heard the door close behind Middleton, and then collapsed.

CHAPTER VII.

CORNERED.

It was some time before Barry Stokes recovered sufficiently to take note of things. The spell of fear, the threat hurled into his teeth by Middleton quite unstrung him. Villainy, however, was so deep-rooted that he could not divest himself of it. He regretted that he had sold the secret which the Hotel Pictus held to Blake Abernathy, but he was in such sorry need of cash that this one thing overcame his discretion.

Yost Middleton was in Paris and knew where his wife lodged. What he would do was the one thing which now troubled the ex-valet. If Middleton effected a reconciliation with his wife, it would be farewell to his (Stokes') hopes of getting Lemora into his clutches. The perturbed man paced the floor of his room under a strain. His brain seemed to whirl. He must do something and that promptly.

Abernathy, who had designs against the tenants of the Hotel Pictus—for a man does not give up two thousand francs for nothing—would not let grass spring up under his feet. Stokes worried on till he was getting into a fever. At length he hurried from his lodgings and found himself on the street below.

His first thought was to find where Middleton lodged. This promised to be a task, for there are thousands of hotels in Paris. He argued, however, that the rich American would not patronize a cheap nor obscure hostelry, and he hastened to make a tour of the best.

Fortune favored him. He discovered that Middleton had installed himself in the Hotel Napoleon and was traveling under his own name.

He scribbled a note saying that if Middleton would call at a certain number on a certain street he would obtain information of great moment to him. Leaving this note for the American, Stokes slipped away and prepared to play the most desperate game of his life.

If he could put Yost Middleton out of the way his path to Lemora would be clear. He would circumvent Blake Abernatny in whatever game that worthy had in hand, and Mrs. Middleton would be at his mercy.

It is the self-conceited villain who makes a slip between cup and lip, and Stokes was about to meet a man whom he wished at that time at the antipodes. The house to which he had invited Middleton in the note left at the Hotel Napoleon was a well-to-do affair where he had first lodged upon coming to Paris. He knew it well, and was sure that he could engage a room from the woman who kept it. To reach the place was the work of a few moments, and the bargain was made. He secured a room on the second floor back, and sat down like a spider in his web for the fly for whom he had left the decoy.

The night wore on. If Middleton should not get the note before day, Stokes would have a long vigil before him, but the game was worth the candle, and he curbed his impatience and waited on. Once or twice he dozed, but that did not matter. At last he roused himself and resolved to take a breath of fresh air. Fatal resolution!

He was descending the narrow staircase when he came face to face with a man coming up. At the thought that it might be Middleton he drew back against the wall and held his breath.

There was a dim light on the stairway, but enough to enable him to see the face of the person whom he had unexpectedly encountered.

"Ho! You?" rang in his ears and a heavy hand dropped like a triphammer upon his shoulder.

Stokes felt his blood run cold. He was pushed into the better light and stared at by eyes that seemed to read the innermost tablets of his blighted soul.

"This is luck," continued the man on the lower step. "I did not think I had you for a fellow lodger."

"No?" It was all poor Stokes could stammer.

"Where is your room? No, come into mine."

"I cannot. Really, I have important business out on the street," the valet said.

"You can postpone that business," was the reply. "We have met before."

Yes, they had met before. Stokes' memory flitted across the sea, and once more he was in the roof garden of the Alhambra watching Edith Middleton and this man, Mason Marx, in the shadow of the palms. He had not seen the man for three months, and then he had shadowed him in the Italian city.

"What, aren't you coming with me?" queried Mason Marx, whilst his eyes flashed in a manner which was not to the ex-valet's liking. "I won't keep you long—perhaps."

To resist meant bodily injury, if nothing more. Stokes beat back his desires and was led up the stair. He was escorted down a narrow hall and almost flung into a little room which looked out upon the street. Mason Marx turned on the light.

"Fool!" said he, looking straight into the ex-valet's face. "The twelve hours are nearly up. You got my warning?"

"Your warning?"

"Yes, the note to which was signed 'The Avenger.'"

It all came back to Barry Stokes now. The whole thing rushed over him like the waves of an angry sea. Mason Marx was the author of the warning, and now he, like a dumb fool, had fallen into his hands.

The door had been locked. He had heard the bolt click, and he was helpless, at the mercy of the man upon whom he had spied for Middleton in the garden. A weapon reposed in his pocket, but he dared not move his hand toward it. He felt that Mason Marx was armed as well, though he saw no signs of a weapon.

"You are still playing the same old game!" hissed the American, glaring at Stokes. "You are still serving your master?"

"I am serving no master," stammered the ex-valet. "I am only living quietly in Paris."

"A human vulture like yourself never fails to be on the lookout for carrion," was the response. "You are never to leave this room alive, Barry Stokes!"

A chill of horror swept instantly to the heart of the man who heard. Could he compromise with this man? Could he break the cords which bound him to his fate? Would subterfuge effect his release? What if he told Mason Marx that if he waited awhile he might come face to face with Yost Middleton? He thought of this idea, but rejected it. After all, Marx might have no cause with Middleton.

His mind reverted to Blake Abernathy, who, in his desperation, seemed the only way out of the terrible dilemma against which fate had cast him.

"You don't know whom you would slay," he said, at last, grasping the only straw which Hope seemed to send his way.

"I know," was the answer.

"But you don't know, perhaps, that the man whom Edith would find is this moment in Paris."

Mason Marx started and his face changed color.

"In Paris? That wretch?" Marx cried, leaning toward Stokes, who began to take heart.

"In Paris, I say."

"It is a trick to save your worthless life," laughed Mason Marx.

"As I live and hope for Heaven, it is true!" asseverated Stokes, with all the power he could command. "I have seen him within the last few hours."

"Where?"

"In a house not far from here." He did not care to say that that house was where he really lived.

"Do they—Edith and Lemora—know?"

"I cannot say."

Mason Marx remained silent for a moment.

"I can't trust you, Barry Stokes," said he at last. "You will lie to save your life."

Stokes knew this, but now for once, at least, he was telling the truth.

"Stand up, Stokes!"

The ex-valet rose to his feet, and centered his gaze upon the man who had appointed himself his executioner. Mason Marx drew a silver-mounted revolver, and Stokes saw his hand clutch it vindictively.

"This weapon is noiseless," came from Marx's lips. "It kills without the slightest sound. It is the latest triumph in firearms. After death the judgment, Barry Stokes."

That his life hung on a slender thread no one knew better than the doomed wretch. He thought, wished, rapidly. Why did not Yost Middleton come? If he had received the note of decoy, why wasn't he even then coming to the rescue of the bitterest enemy he had in the world?

The weapon, glittering in the hands of Mason Marx, was lifted to a level with Stokes' head. A door banged somewhere in the house. The hum of voices came up from below. There were actually footsteps on the stairs. Barry Stokes threw up one hand.

"Wait!" he cried to Marx. "Give me one minute of life. Your enemy is out yonder!"

The hand of Mason Marx dropped at his side.

CHAPTER VIII.

EDITH SEEKS HELP.

When Lemora the beautiful wakened from her slumber after her adventure with Blake Abernathy, whom she had shot in the parlor of the Hotel Pictus, the light of another day was streaming over the floor and couch.

Gradually the whole dread scene came back to her. She remembered Edith's return, her wild cry that the man belonged to her for vengeance, the strange disappearance of the supposed corpse, and, finally, Edith's kiss as she bade her good night. Wondering if Mrs. Middleton was astir, Lemora tiptoed to her sleeping chamber and opened the door. The bed had not been disturbed.

What had become of Edith she could not conjecture. She had not heard her quit the place, and the mystery which also filled her with fears sank deep into her soul. Her cheeks lost color when she thought that the man who had confronted her, if he were not dead, might return. Girl that she was, she reasoned that no one had carried off a dead man, but that her shot had merely stunned, and that her victim had recovered and slipped away. This man was Edith's mortal enemy, and in some mysterious way was connected witn Mason Marx, who had in a manner been responsible for the breaking of the ties between Mrs. Middleton and her husband.

Edith had guarded her secret so well that Lemora had never been admitted to the fringe of it. Who was this Mason Marx that he could separate Edith and her husband? Sometimes she blamed the woman with whom she had crossed the sea, but the next moment she believed that Edith had a right to befriend Marx, even at the sacrifice of her husband's love.

She had met Mason Marx more than once since the flight from America, a handsome man of thirty-one, who, in her opinion, could not commit a crime of the nature of the terrible one for which he had been tried. Not only this, but Edith had brought them face to face on more than one occasion. Lemora had grown to admire Mason Marx, but at the same time, despite her heart sentiments, there rose before her the trial and the belief among thousands that, despite the verdict, his hands were red with human blood.

It was Edith's purpose, as she knew, to clear Marx of even the slightest trace of suspicion. More than this, she had crossed the sea to find the real murderer, and on this hinged the secret which she was guarding at the expense of her happiness.

She waited in vain for Edith. Lemora did not know the soul travail through which the disowned wife had passed the night after the events we have related. She did not know the long hours of torture, the sleepless watch for Blake Abernathy, though she knew not his name, to return. While Edith, alone in the parlor of their apartments, was waiting for this man to reappear, she (Lemora) was sleeping dreamlessly in her silent room.

Could she have followed Edith, she would have seen her quit the hotel and call a cab. It was near another day. The last strollers of the night had sought their cots, and Paris had not roused itself for a new day.

Determination was written on every line of Edith Middleton's pale and classic face. She leaned back in the depths of the cab and communed with her thoughts. When at last the vehicle drew to the curb she looked out and smiled faintly.

She alighted and approached a door upon which was the name which she had on a little card in her purse. It was an early call, but Edith did not think of this.

Three minutes later, a man in smoking gown and with a pipe in his hands received her in a narrow hall and escorted her to a room on the upper floor. Once and once only he turned and looked at her.

"You need no introduction, madame," he said, when she had seated herself. "I am glad to see you, Mrs. Middleton."

Edith started and then bowed.

"I am Edith Middleton," she said. "I have come to you, Monsieur Legeorge, on business, partly because you solicit American business, and partly because you are of my country, despite your name."

The detective smiled. "I remember seeing you a year ago in New York," he pursued. "I happened to be there during the trial of Mason Marx."

"It is on account of that event that I have come to you," was the answer.

"Yes. I am at your service, madame."

"I have been robbed!" Edith exclaimed, coloring. "I have been plundered of my wedding ring."

"Thieves, as a rule, do not take such things," the detective observed, unless—"

"Unless they have some secret purpose?"

"You are right, but I am keeping your story from myself."

"There is not much to tell," said Edith. "Find the thief for me, and I will recover the ring."

"The arrest will become public property——"

Edith leaned forward and laid her hand on the detective's arm.

"I don't want the man arrested, heavens no!" she exclaimed. "I only want him located. Set me upon his trail, and I promise to do the rest."

There was a flashing of the brilliant dark eyes as she spoke, and a slight quiver of the hand that rested on the detective's sleeve.

"Give me a clew if you have one."

"This man belongs to me," pursued Edith. "To find him I have searched a whole continent. I have ransacked Milan, Florence, Monte Carlo, Rome and London. More than once he barely escaped me. He is in Paris now. He robbed me of my wedding ring."

"A rascal," smiled the detective, "who seems to have a knack of eluding his huntress."

"The greatest villain in the world!" cried Edith. "He goes under a number of disguises and names as suits his purposes. Yesterday he was David Dare, today he is Blake Abernathy. Here," and Edith drew forth a small photograph which she placed in the detective's hands. "Study well that face. Note the eyes, the chin and, above all, look for a man who has a bullet wound in his forehead."

Girard Legeorge laid the photograph upon the table, and once more centered his gaze upon Edith's face. How beautiful this stately woman was! He had seen her in her own land, blessed in everything that makes life endurable—a splendid home, a husband's love, the adoration of thousands, but now a woman with one purpose at the bottom of which vengeance kept awake like the watch-dog Cerberus at the gates of perdition.

He had heard much of the story of her life; he knew that her husband had cast her off because of Mason Marx, that her life secret was connected with the man tried for murder, but he did not know why.

"You will find this man for me?" cried Edith. "You will search Paris, the Continent, the world, if necessary, for me? I shall give you carte blanche in everything. I want this man. You are not to apprehend him. You are not to turn him over to any tribunal. You have but to find him and say to me, 'There is your man!'"

She stood erect with the last words on her lips, and looked down upon the detective like a queen of imperious tragedy. Her beauty glowed before him like a star of the first magnitude.

He wondered how Yost Middleton could cast aside a woman like this. Were she his wife, he would have forgiven her sins, if sins she really had, but all men are not alike. Perhaps Edith was not guilty, perhaps, after all, she had a right to befriend Mason Marx, who was a human mystery, and he must be much to this queenly woman for her to keep her secret and be renounced by a man like Yost Middleton. For Edith, Girard Legeorge resolved that he would do anything.

"If this man is living I will find him!" he exclaimed.

"Remember! you are to find him for me alone, and not for the vengeance of the foreign courts?"

"I understand, madame."

Edith held out her ungloved hand, and her soft fingers sank into his palm. It was a pledge which thrilled the detective.

"If accident throws him across my path before you find him, well and good," she went on. "It may be thus. There are strange happenings in this world. I shall be found at the Hotel Pictus. I am lodged there with my ward. The robbery occurred there last night. Look for the man with the wound in his forehead, though I know the surgeons of Paris are wonderful men. Lemora's aim was true, but Fate saved this man for me!"

Edith turned to go, with the eyes of the detective upon her.

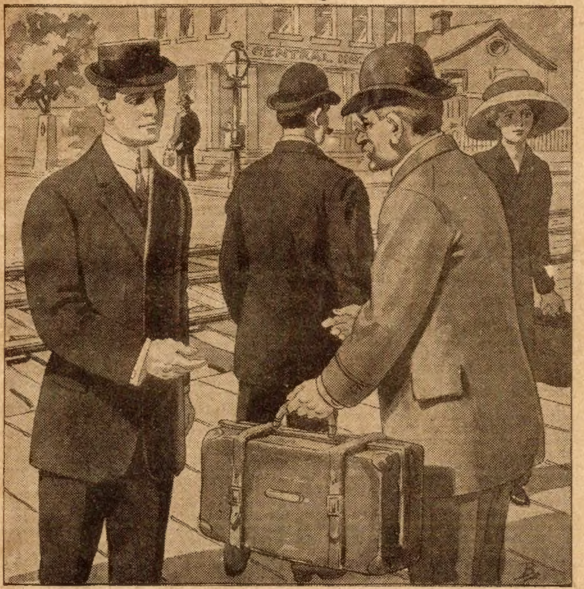
"Madame," said Legeorge, "I ask no

(Continued on page fourteen.)

THE DETECTIVE BARRIER;

Or, HOW AND WHY?

By WILLIAM H. MANNING



"My name is Barford, and I am on the case."

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CHAPTER XV.

DOCIA TALKS.

AT TWILIGHT, that evening, Barford addressed his aid.

"Netley, we will put on our old clothes and go out. Try to avoid recognition, and melt with the dark and with local color, as I may say. Eliminate your personality and become a mere atom. Look, watch, listen, and be as dangerous as you can."

"Excellent!" quoth Netley, smiling. "I will be an invisible ghost, but with ears capable of turning to all four points of the compass at once. What is my objective?"

"I have told you that I expect Docia to make a false move. She wants a lost something, and wants it badly. It is hard on a person as much keyed up as she is to sit idle when action is necessary to recover that lost something. You will notice that I have publicly left her strictly alone. She has not been questioned, she has not had an inkling of the fact that she is under study. Result, I look for a false move on her part."

"Possibly she will make it, but I tell you she has a head on her shoulders, and it isn't an empty shell like Levi's. There's a brain in perpetual storage under her head of hair."

"Brains don't count in criminal history. We will admit her ability, and—rely upon her brains to lead her into a slip. To business, Netley! With your gallantry to the finer-tempered sex you lose time. Yes, to business! As near as I can tell Docia has not visited Roland Varrick lately, and it is about time that his distressful burden of typhoid let up a bit. Perhaps there will be a stir at Peter Caine's house soon, and you will be there to see it. If Docia comes, use the trellis and listen. If anybody goes out, follow him."

"Meaning Varrick."

"Or Peter."

"Peter!" Netley echoed. "Have you marked him, too?"

"Has it never occurred to you that your description of the man who attacked you at the hotel fits Peter fairly well? Stout and gray-haired, you said. Peter is no chicken from the spring hatch, but he is still a robust man. Mark these facts: Peter must know that Varrick's illness is a sham, so he may be an active ally. Docia needed help at the hotel, and Varrick was nearly helpless with a sprained leg. My guess is that she had Peter along with her, and that it was he who locked you into the unoccupied room."

Netley whistled softly.

"I begin to think this a real wicked world," he commented dryly.

Barford gave more explicit directions as to the manner of procedure and the length of time devoted to watching, and then his aid abruptly demanded:

"Meanwhile, what will you be doing?"

And Barford briefly answered:

"Watching Docia!"

This statement returned to Netley's mind as they separated, at nine o'clock, and he slipped quietly along in the darkness to gain his post of duty.

"Watching Docia, eh?" he muttered. "Why not Martha Belden? Why not that red-headed sister who smote Kendall in the face and felt like killing him?"

At that moment Barford was in the field west of the village, moving with freedom intended to avoid suggestions of secrecy, but nevertheless very quietly. His course took him alongside the plowed field where the shack-couple had chased the person with the nondescript feet, and he smiled slightly as he recalled Netley's exclamation.

"What tracks, what tracks!" he repeated, and there was wonder in his low tones.

Continuing, he reached the entrance to the Lettington grounds, passed by, went two lots beyond, entered the grounds and then slipped quietly back along the line of shrubbery and gained his desired point of watch. It was the rear of the Lettington premises.

Outwardly, matters were as usual, the lower floor being dark and several rooms lighted above. Window shades were not lowered, and ceilings lay exposed to his view, but nobody was to be seen.

A careful stroll satisfied him no one was in the grounds, and then he grew more active. Previous investigation enabled him to know that a certain rear chamber was used as a sitting-room by the family, and that there was a way of getting to a place where voices must be audible. He was there to make a venture.

While he waited the back door was opened and the red-haired servant appeared with a light in her hand. She was middle-aged and commonplace of appearance, but he could see her clearly enough to approve of Annabel's verdict that she had a "face rich with kindness."

She dropped the contents of a dish into a bucket outside, stepped back, shut the door, and then the click of a key came to his ears.

"The night closing," he thought, with satisfaction. "Now I am reasonably safe."

He went a few yards and picked up a gardener's ladder. A moment later he had it leaning against the rear of the building, directly under the window of the room so interesting. For several nights he had resisted a desire to see inside, and always fearful the ladder would be moved, but the time had come for the risk. Discovery might mean a bad setback, but the venture was afoot.

At this point the building was a one-story extension, made to supply a narrow shed, with its roof just below the window. He ascended, reached the roof and listened. Through the open window voices come to him easily. For the moment his usual caution deserted him, and the desire to see who was there became masterful. Very carefully he hazarded the survey.

He saw Docia and her aunt, Mrs. Forrest. The older woman was seated, but Docia was on her feet, pacing the room with quick, nervous steps. Brief as he was he saw that she was overwrought, prey to deep emotion, and that her aunt was sadly disturbed by her mood. Mrs. Forrest was speaking gently, but seemed to receive small attention, and, certainly, she brought forth no reply.

Barford changed his position a trifle, and was pleased when he suddenly discovered that a neighboring tree cast a deep shadow at one side of the open way. He nestled there and risked further use of his eyes.

Suddenly Docia paused in her excited walk and faced Mrs. Forrest with a mixture of agitation and almost fierce resolution.

"This must stop!" she exclaimed. "I can endure it no longer!"

"But how can it be stopped?" asked the aunt, mildly. "For the present you are helpless, especially as Roland is confined to his room. As for that, I am not certain but it is for the best. Activity is likely to bring great trouble, but patient waiting——"

"Patience!" Docia exclaimed, irritably. "I loathe the word!"

"There might be something worse——"

"But this waiting, this waiting is intolerable! The village seethes with excitement. Detectives are on every corner, they are constantly prying into what does not concern them. Am I to sit idle and risk their finding out—you know what."

"What can you do?"

"It must be found, it must!" Docia declared, passionately. "Patience! And waiting! These things are unendurable. If I take your advice I simply leave a broad road for those miserable detectives to learn the truth. Suppose somebody else finds it——"

"You know Mr. Barford has not found it, because you searched——"

"I did, and very foolishly. If he had found it, would he hide it in his room? No! Most certainly not. It would be in his pocket. I was a fool to go to his hotel, and both Roland and Peter told me as much before I went."

"Well, you have seen what your idea of activity may lead to——"

"That step was rash, foolish. What I may do now will be carefully considered. The detectives must be blocked. If I wait they may at any time find it, and it will so surely prove why Harden Kendall was killed. Think what that will be to me!"

"You are not yet molested."

"I'm going to try and prevent all calamities. First, I'll find it, for finding must be possible. Having secured it, I am mistress of the situation. Words are not proof. Let the detectives pry and let them make arrests—after it is found."

Mrs. Forrest sighed like one who had fought a losing battle and was conscious of failure.

"The marriage may never become known," she argued faintly.

"How can it be otherwise? I've heard so much about the ability of detectives to learn things that I shiver at every word or look. The strangers here are reaching out in all directions, and they will doubtless turn the whole State upside down."

"There is no real evidence without the marriage certificate——"

"Now you turn to my side of the case. Do you still say there is no need of action? That marriage! Oh! why will people be so reckless in their affairs of heart? Women buy a spool of thread with critical care, and plunge into matrimony as if it were no more than eating candy. Men—but why try to understand their love matters? Do they understand themselves?"

Mrs. Forrest shook her head dismally.

"That marriage!" Docia pursued, beginning her walk anew, and speaking with passionate intensity. "It was madness that gave first thought to it. He lost his senses, and the woman—ah! how is she placed now?"

The speaker wheeled upon the elder woman violently. Barford saw her face tremble with deep feeling, and scarcely dared to breathe. He was athirst for more than obscure terms, athirst for definite information. It hovered on the lips of the two women, yet stayed its steps.

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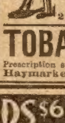

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"Remember," urged Mrs. Forrest, "that nobody knows——"

"Somebody does know!" Docia cried feverishly. "I know! I know the folly, the madness, the disgrace, the constant dread that all the world will know. It is too much, too much!"

She flung herself into a chair and burst into tumultuous weeping.

CHAPTER XVI.

A MYSTERIOUS JOURNEY.

Barford remained motionless at the window, his gaze upon the two women. He had heard much, but not enough to satisfy him. The drift of words suggested that Docia had married Harden Kendall and repented too late, and, perhaps, that she had found the union so distasteful that she had broken it off. Kendall was not there to say how. Would this woman say?

Mrs. Forrest rose quickly, and, moving to the side of the weeping girl, clasped her arms about the shaking figure. Then she laid her face against the quivering cheek of the girl and began to talk soothingly, tenderly, almost as to a grieving child. Her hands, too, strayed caressingly, and the goodness of the elderly lady was like a shower of sunshine.

Docia was no weakling, and presently her sobs lessened and died away. She dried her tears, gave her aunt a responsive caress and slowly rose to her feet. A smile appeared on her face, and she seemed to have cast nervous emotion largely away.

"Say no more, dear," urged Mrs. Forrest, tenderly. "I will do what you have requested."

"But the journey at night——"

"Will be nothing, Docia. I am not inexperienced in travel. Yes, I will go, and your plan shall be tried."

"But, auntie, if you feel that I am asking too much of you——"

"The labor is nothing, dear. I have only been considering the wisdom of the act. I shall reach the city at ten-thirty, and after that all will be easy. I'll see the man in the morning and settle matters with him. Very easy, as you have coached me so carefully. But can you rely upon the young lady to come here?"

"I feel that I can. Yes, I know it. She is a dear, womanly woman, and that means much. She will come, and the night will be much the more endurable with her near."

"You will not tell her anything?" exclaimed Mrs. Forrest, hastily.

"Oh, no, no, certainly not. She shall know nothing."

"As a companion she may be all well enough."

"She will be. I take to her oddly."

"Very well, then I'll make my preparations. There is ample time for the train, but none to fritter away. As I am already nearly dressed for the journey I've little more to do——"

"There's the bell. She must have come. I'll go and see."

Docia disappeared from the room and her aunt lingered irresolute. Barford gave little heed to her, for he had heard news of importance and was considering his own best course. If Mrs. Forrest was going on an errand for her niece, he wanted to know all about it, but was reluctant to leave Grandon just then.

There was a delay of a few minutes, and then the door was re-opened. Docia re-appeared, but not alone. A second young woman was with her, and the detective grew dumfounded as he recognized her. It was Annabel!

The girl detective was the picture of innocence. A smile wreathed her comely face, and amiability and good will to all of the human race seemed to accompany it. Responsive smiles were bent upon her, and it was clear that Docia and Mrs. Forrest did not for a moment suspect that a spy had been admitted to their home.

Docia had been made more cheerful by her coming, and, indeed, only the barely visible traces of recent tears betrayed that any shadow was on her mind. The sudden fancy she had taken for Annabel was in full sway, and she had one of the few happy hours of her recent life.

"I am glad to see you again," said Mrs. Forrest, and she said it with sincerity.

"You can bear with me more patiently, this time," returned Annabel, with a light, musical laugh. "For the time being I am no dreadful agent for gas mantles, eager to prey upon your pocketbooks. You need have no fear of that."

Barford moved uneasily at the window. The fact that she was still dangerous, and that, playing a false part, she was a foe of the two women who received her so kindly stirred his sense of honor. Quickly remembering that he was a detective, and that he aspired to punish only the guilty, he stilled the protests of conscience. Justice was superior to mankind.

Various inconsequential remarks followed, and then Docia came to business.

"It is very fortunate," she observed, "that I invited you here tonight. My aunt is called away on business, and your company will make me feel more secure. Not that I fear intruders, but I don't like loneliness. It will be pleasant to know you are in the next room after we retire."

Barford, accustomed to the changes in Annabel's expression, was aware that she took due heed to the mention of the elder lady's call from an unknown quarter, but no explanation was asked or made. Mrs. Forrest left the room to make preparations, and the girls were alone. Docia seated herself and smiled upon her caller.

"Do you still feel inclined," she asked, "to change your quarters to my house?"

"I surely do," Annabel answered. "Selling gas mantles in a strange town is not always thrillingly agreeable, and it will be so nice to have your company when I am idle. As I told you before, my present quarters are not really bad, but this house—dear me, I'm delighted to come. Your invitation was so kind!"

"No!" Docia protested. "It was selfish!"

Barford blinked in surprise. Here was news wholly unexpected. That crafty Annabel should go more than once to the Lettington house was to be expected of that resourceful miss, but not that she should be asked to make her home there while in town. Immediately Barford foresaw discoveries on her part, but the old disquieting thought returned.

She had sent Levi to him with a note, and if the weak-minded youth told that fact to Docia she would see light. It was to be regretted that there was no way to make Levi hold his tongue.

The girls chatted gayly until Mrs. Forrest reappeared, equipped for the street. Barford waited no longer, but moved down the ladder and returned that useful object to its proper place, after which he left the grounds.

When, a little later, Mrs. Forrest took the north-bound train, he was at the station, and when the locomotive was wailing in the distance he entered the telegraph office and sent a message in cipher to the district attorney's office.

"Let one of your best officers meet the ten-thirty train from here, locate a gray-haired lady of sixty dressed all in black save for a green bow on her hat. See where she goes, and never lose sight of her. She will do business with some one. Watch both afterward, no matter where they go. Important!"

It happened that the district attorney's assistant read this message before Mrs. Forrest's train arrived in the city.

Having seen the dispatch off, Barford left the station, but did not return to the Lettington house. Well aware that Annabel would attend to all unusual occurrences there, his only thought was to go to the hotel. He was there nearly an hour before Netley, who came in looking none too well pleased with his experiences.

"I'm going to buy a garden here," he announced, "and raise vegetables for market, to-wit, namely, potatoes, peas, cabbages, and so forth. I want something more exciting than detective work."

"Quiet evening, eh?"

"Quiet's no name for it. Varrick and the Caines went to bed at nine, having in mind the old axiom, 'Early to bed,' and the rest of it."

Barford had more to tell, and he went over the ground carefully.

"Seems there really was a marriage," Netley commented.

"Say, rather, there was a marriage certificate. If it was signed there was, we may believe, a marriage, but it may possibly have been filled in all but the signatures and never completed."

"We've got to get hold of that certificate."

"We never shall, Netley. It was burned in the woods. Have you forgotten 'L-e-t,' Let?"

Netley whistled appreciatively.

"I believe you, old man! Yet, Docia doesn't know of the burning. Say, Barford, was she really married to Kendall?"

Barford laid aside the remains of his cigar and rose.

"Ask her!" he replied.

CHAPTER XVII.

A REVOLVER DROPS.

Constable Carter was a good deal perplexed by an interview he had the next morning with Barford, who sought for him early and held him in conversation for a full hour. When the detective was gone Mr. Carter pondered long and in perplexity.

"Why the dickens," he muttered, "did he have so much to say about Roland Varrick, and why did he eternally harp upon the question of whether Roland might have made a secret marriage? That young fellow has lived here all his life, and his history is clear to every citizen in town. Barford seemed pretty near mad with me because I wouldn't admit that Varrick might possibly be married. Now, what did that mean? Why the deuce—why the deuce——"

The constable wrestled with the problem long and hard, finally becoming so angry that he temporarily abandoned effort to comprehend, and went out and washed his carriage with vigor that put a shine upon it not seen before in months. Completing his task he set down a pail he had been using and fell into thought again.

"Why the deuce——"

He did not know, and it made him so indignant that he kicked the pail and sent it spinning two rods away.

Unconscious that he had so upset his worthy helper, Barford was at that time making his way toward the railroad station. Knowing that Rich, the cab-driver, made a practice of meeting all trains, if possible, he wanted to see him again.

There was something in the cabman's statement that he brought Kendall home in the middle of the afternoon that puzzled the detective. Nobody had been found that would admit having seen him after his arrival, so where had he been? If he had retired to his room, what had he done there?

Soon after Kendall was found dead Carter had searched the apartment and found nothing strange, and Thomson and Barford, himself, had later tried their luck there. No private papers rewarded their search, and the interesting question was: What had Kendall been doing if he was in town? Had the Beldens purloined the valuables after he left the room?

The train arrived, and Barford had not brought Rich under observation when the passengers came away. There were few, and none that were known to the watcher. Somebody else, near at hand, was known to him. Thomson, his ever active rival, was at the opposite end of the platform. That gentleman nodded and smiled, and there was such a suggestion of triumph in his grin that Barford was exasperated. He wondered what Thomson had learned.

Among those who had come by the train was a gray-headed man. He paused on the platform and hesitated as to which way he should turn. He ended by coming toward Barford, and, while Thomson gazed approvingly at three pretty girls who had moved his way, the man addressed a citizen.

"Say, Morris, I want to see one of those detectives who are in town. Where can he be found? I've something to say to him," he said.

"Here's one right here, Pottson. He will——"

But the officer indicated was already at hand, and he declared himself promptly, glad that the man had turned his way.

"My name is Barford, and I'm on the case," he announced. "If you have something to say I shall be glad to hear you."

"Good!" commented the gray-haired man briefly. "Come to my house."

He led the way, stepping off with quick, firm tread. His home proved to be a small, but cosy house on a side street, and there he presently had Barford seated in a room with a heart-touching brand of cigars before them and a couple of them alight.

"I'm Pottson," announced the master of the house. "Runner, alias commercial traveler, for Wilkes, Sneed & Hinch's tobacco house in the city. I am able to be here only between trips, and I've just come around after a short run southward. Trade was good, and— but I'll drop that part. Mr. Barford, I was in Grandon the last three days of Harden Kendall's life, but left on the ten-thirty train the night he died."

"Not too early, I take it," suggested the detective, pleasantly, "for you to miss seeing something."

"I saw something," Pottson agreed, with a short nod. "Kendall was out of his house and the Belden sisters and Jasper Logan were gunning for him."

"Gunning?" Barford repeated.

"Oh! I don't mean with visible guns, though I did see a revolver. Let me explain. By gunning I mean that they were chasing him up with some object in mind that somebody else will have to interpret."

"Let me try."

"The job is yours. I shall be glad to stop short of telling my story, for it's not an agreeable task. I understand that the Beldens claim they were not out of the house and did not see Kendall. Bad for me, for they are neighbors."

Mr. Pottson moved uneasily and seemed as much troubled as his words implied. Barford waited expectantly. It was true that Martha had denied, as Pottson said, and it might be important whether she spoke the truth.

"After night fell," the citizen pursued, "I came out of the house and went into my garden. A few of my earliest seeds were up and the night was a trifle cool, so I wondered if they were wholly safe from frost. I threw a newspaper over one bed and then walked to my street fence. I was going to drop in and see my brother, but he is a late bird and there was no pressing hurry.

"Pretty soon three persons came briskly along the sidewalk. They were Martha and Dorcas Belden, and Jasper Logan. They passed by so near I could

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have touched them with a walking-cane, but I was half-hidden by bushes and they did not see me. What I overheard kept me from speaking to them.

"They were talking fast, but very low, as if to avoid being heard, but I heard all right. Now, here are the sentences I caught, as near as I can recall the words.

"'Kendall has forfeited all claim to our forbearance,' said Dorcas in her peppery way.

"'We will manage to make him understand that,' Martha put in, her way, as usual, cool and full of force.

"'All I want,' added Jasper, 'is to get one lick at him!'

"'I've had mine already,' boasted Dorcas. 'I slapped him good and hard. You should have heard it ring.'

"'It was a bee-sting to what I'll do when we find him——'

"This was from Jasper, but Martha broke in impatiently.

"'You both talk nonsense. Wait! We will soon find him, and then will come the settlement.'

"Just then something fell clattering to the sidewalk, and I saw it was a revolver that had slipped from Jasper's pocket. He picked it up quickly, as if scared by its being revealed, and that taught the whole party caution. They kept silent for a few seconds, and when they began to speak again it was in lower tones and they were so far away that I heard no more."

"Did you watch them further?" Barford asked.

"Out of sight. They turned into Maple street, and so disappeared."

"You saw no more?"

"Not a thing."

"Did you hear any loud talking anywhere?"

"No."

"There is a rumor that is hard to trace to its source that Jasper and Kendall quarreled outside."

"Maybe, but I don't know. My time was valuable, so I went into the house, got the few things necessary for my trip, and went to my brother's to see him before leaving town. I suppose I was in there ten minutes, talking to him. Leaving, I hurried away, being sent into a brisk pace by a bright flash of lightning and a sizzle of thunder. I caught my train and left town. That's all I know, but after wrestling with my conscience a while I've decided that I ought to tell you the whole business."

"These three persons," commented Barford, "were a hostile party."

"We've got to allow they were on the warpath," Pottson admitted. "But," he added hopefully, "they didn't say they intended to kill Kendall."

"Nevertheless, Kendall was killed, and probably soon after they were seen hunting for him. What are we to infer?"

CHAPTER XVIII.

BORROWED MONEY.

When Barford left Pottson and went to the postoffice, he found two letters awaiting his call. The first was from the man who was pursuing the shack couple. The report was that they were still in hot flight, and had thus far succeeded in evading actual encounter by the neatest kind of cunning. Several times the detective, being hard upon their heels, believed he would sight them, but they slipped out of each danger like foxes, disappearing in one quarter and appearing in another in a way almost miraculous.

"They may be a dull, stupid couple in some ways, as you say," continued the letter, "but they have animal craft enough to make me sweat in every pore. Cunning is no name for it! They will steal from a farmer in one town—they have to eat—and then somehow get ten miles away like a flash. Hanged if I don't admire their slipperiness.

"Just now I have a local officer along with me, and he has advanced the opinion that the male shackman is a woodchopper from the Gashside Hills."

Barford refolded the letter and meditated on the last point. He recalled the history of the shacks. Built for lumber hands, deserted when all timber near Grandon was cut, and then occupied, at times, by luckless persons who wanted to avoid paying rent—an aged book-agent, a man in search of lost health, a scientist, and a clock-mender, all at different times. None of these persons was to be mistaken for the present fugitive, especially as all were feeble waifs on life's path, and the sick man and the scientist were dead and buried in Grandon. Yet, the shack couple had headed for that shelter when they came to the neighborhood.

"If he is a wood-chopper——"

The detective's mind framed the words, and then he drifted away in speculation as to what the possible fact indicated. Presently he aroused, opened the second letter, and found it from the district attorney's office.

"We have made inquiries of Harden Kendall's employes and business associates," it began, "and are convinced that Kendall did not go to Grandon in the middle of the afternoon as your cab-driver said. In fact, it is impossible. He was in his office pretty nearly all the day, and when he was out it was to visit other offices and do business. We place him in this city safely and surely until his usual time of leaving, namely, five-fifty. Hence, he cannot have been in Grandon at three-thirty. Has your cabman any motive for lying?

"Your wire received. We have a capable officer watching the house where the old lady stopped over night. The family she is with are related to her. They are named Blessing, and she is Mrs. Forrest. When she leaves the house our man will net her."

Barford, finishing his reading, was briefly interested in the question of cabman Rich's veracity, but his mind soon centered on Docia's aunt. Most of all he wanted to know what business she had in the city. Given light as to her mission, he would, he was positive, have more light, and it would be a flood. He was still considering the point when a hesitating voice sounded by his side.

"Mr. Barford?"

The detective turned. Jasper Logan was there.

"Can I have a word in private with you?" the man added.

Barford read a whole volume of obscurities—and nothing more—in Jasper's voice, expression, and figure-poise. There was apology, uncertainty, a shrinking, nervousness, and, perhaps, fear in these things. Whatever he had to say, he was timid of saying it. So much was plain, but what it meant was not to be read.

The detective smiled slightly, nodded, and spoke cheerfully.

"Certainly, Mr. Logan. Go right ahead."

"Not here, not here!" and Jasper looked around him anxiously. "It must be private."

"The Kendall house is hard by——"

"Not there, not there!" cried Logan, quickly. "What about your room at the hotel? You go, and I'll follow. But not together."

It was no time to oppose the man's wish, and Barford consented readily, his manner still pleasant and reassuring. Ten minutes later they were in the room.

Jasper sat down, leaned forward in his chair, his face drawn and without its usual color, and abruptly exclaimed:

"Thomson is going to arrest me!"

"What for?" Barford asked, evenly.

"Murdering Harden Kendall!"

"How do you know that?"

"He was overheard telling Constable Carter so. He has applied for a warrant, and when he gets it he will seize me."

"You can prove your innocence, can't you?"

"I am innocent!" declared the trader, vehemently. "I never injured Kendall in my life."

Barford smiled seductively.

"You can prove it, can't you?"

Jasper's face fell. The reassuring manner of his companion did not seem to go so far as the simple question.

"Of course I can," he asserted, after a pause. "That isn't the main point, though. I want to avoid arrest. Men taken in that way, no matter how innocent, spend weeks, months in jail, waiting for trial, and then there is the further delay of the trial. Six months of that sort of life will ruin my business, yes, and take my last penny. Small comfort to be found innocent, if a man's last dollar has gone to prove his want of blame."

"Shut off the arrest——"

"Just what I want to do. Just why I am here!" said Jasper, eagerly.

"Very simple, Mr. Logan. Prove where you were that evening."

Jasper's gaze fell and sought the floor.

"I was with Dorcas Belden," he explained. "I'm going to marry her, some time, and I was there."

"At her house? I understand that though she is much at Kendall's, she really lives elsewhere. At her house?"

"Yes."

"And you did not go out at all?"

Logan twirled his hat uneasily.

"No," he replied. "I stayed right there until I went to walk, as I've told you before. But that isn't why I'm here, not wholly. I want to speak about Asa Rich, the cab-driver. He says he brought Kendall home in the middle of the afternoon. That's a barefaced lie!"

"Why should he lie?"

"I think I know. He often drove Kendall home when he came to town by the branch railroad, and so got on good terms with him. Finally, he borrowed money from him. You see, Rich has two weaknesses—he drinks too much, and he fools away his money. Kendall loaned him something, though how much I don't know, and without a note or any security. He said so at the house, and rather boasted of it, claiming that it was very safe to trust Rich. That was three months ago, and lately Kendall has not been so sure. He has been asking for his money, and not receiving it. He was getting angry, too. Now, put things together."

Jasper leaned forward, ticked off the items on his hand with a free finger, and added:

"Rich owes that money and can't pay. There is no written evidence that he owes it. He has only to make way with Kendall and the debt is settled, for lack of proof makes him safe. Put these facts with his lie that he brought Kendall home in the middle of the afternoon—eh?"

Logan now looked the detective straight in the eye, and there was the enthusiasm of a discoverer in his manner.

"Suppose," suggested Barford, "that he was simply mistaken in the day when he brought Kendall home?"

"Eh?"

"My information is that he did bring the lumberman three days previous to the fatal day. May he not have been confused as to the day?"

"Wouldn't he know whether it was the day of Kendall's death?"

"You have said that Rich drinks too much."

"Is he to escape justice because he took a glass of whisky?" demanded Jasper, sharply.

"I hardly think so. He will doubtless get his deserts. It is not just right to make too much of what may be a trifle. Now, there is that walk you took the night Kendall was killed. Possibly Thomson is building high on it, but I know you can explain if you will."

Jasper had been either truly or artificially enthusiastic in seeking to set suspicion moving against Rich, but the mood vanished at mention of his walk. Once more he grew frightened, and he was the picture of dismay, but he saw the loophole that Barford offered, and his prearranged methods were swept away by a sudden, controlling impulse.

He explained impetuously, meeting the detective's gaze steadily.

"I'll tell you all about that walk. It was no pleasure trip, for I would have violated the law if I had been able. I'm a dealer in cattle, you know. Lately, I've had dealings with Shaw, the farmer over west, and he cheated me by crooked work. I couldn't prove it, for though justice was on my side I had no hold. He held a brindled heifer that was practically a clean steal from me. I determined to have that heifer!"

"Yes?" said Barford, encouragingly.

"I hired a man to drive it away, and we went to Shaw's to get it on the sly,

(Continued on page thirteen.)

So Tired of Tired Feet! Use TIZ

Gets the "Tired" Out in a Few Minutes. Makes Your Feet Sore-Proof.

"O fudge! It's awful how tired feet make you feel tired all over—so dead tired. Then, when you've got a corn besides, and a bunion, and a few blisters, and your feet are terribly swollen, you don't care if you've got a million dollars

"Pull, Johnny, Pull!"

—you're tired, that's all. A million dollars can't help you, any more than 25 cents will."

A quarter buys a box of TIZ,—a wonder for tired, sore, tender, chafed, blistered, swollen, sweaty, smelly feet, corns, callouses and bunions, chilblains and frostbite. The moment you use it, you give a sigh of relief, and then you smile. There's nothing as good as TIZ, so don't accept any attempted imitation. TIZ draws out all the poisonous exudations that make foot troubles.

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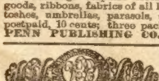

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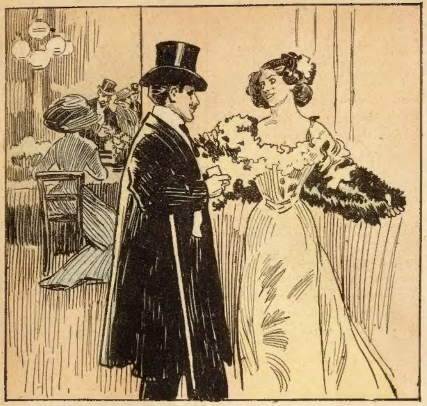


She—We've been engaged now six years, Fred.
He—Yes, but for that reason we shan't have to stay married so long!

A Sure Way.

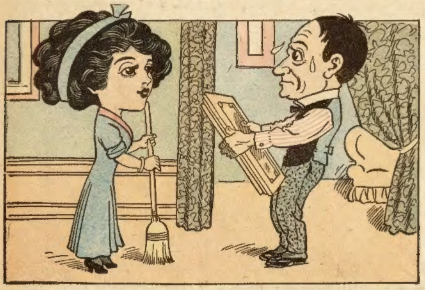
A high school freshman wrote to a juvenile publication earnestly inquiring what he should do to win a coming event in school athletics—the 100-yard dash.

"Run a little faster than the other fellows," wrote the editor in reply.

Hard to See.

First Scot—What sort o' meenister hae ye gotten, Geordie?

Second Scot—We seldom get a glint o' him; six days o' th' week he's envees'ble, and on the seventh he's incomprehens'ble.



Wifey—Gracious, Henry! We never will get through with this housecleaning. Why, you have only moved five pictures in the last fifteen minutes.
Hubby—Well, great heavens, Helen, I'm no moving picture machine!

Mere Curiosity, of Course.

Mrs. A.—Did you ever go to a fortune teller?

Mrs. B.—Yes, once. Before I was married I went to the Probate Court to see how much my fiance's father had left him in his will.

An Athletic Pounder.

"Has Polly got her music lesson mixed up with her gymnasium hour?"

"Of course not. Why do you ask?"

"I thought from the way she was playing, she might have thoughtlessly taken the piano for a punching bag."

A Compound Fracture.

"I just saw Hunter and he looks pretty bad. What's the matter with him, do you know?"

"Compound fracture."

"What sort of compound fracture?"

"He's broke, and Miss Richley, discovering the fact, broke her engagement to him."

The Practical Method.

"The fair sex is much more practical than it was in my girlhood," President Taft's far-famed "Aunt Delia" Torrey said the other day to a Boston reporter.

"In my girlhood," she continued, shrewdly, "when a man jilted a girl she took it to heart; but now she takes it to court."

Understood Advertising.

He was an old merchant who had built up a big business by advertising.

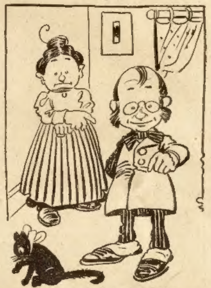
"John," said his wife, "what do you want on your tombstone?"

"Oh," he answered, "it isn't very important what the text is so long as it gets good space and is well displayed."

Still Fresh.

Commercial Traveler (in country hotel)—Are these sheets quite clean?

Chambermaid—I should say so. They're only just home from the laundry. Feel 'em; they're still wet!



Mrs. Ranter—Before I married you, you didn't have a button on your shirt!

Mr. Ranter—And now, I haven't a shirt to put a button on.

Often Discharged.

"Well, Missus Mulcahy, Oi see be th' papers Danny's been discharged from the pinitinchery," observed Mrs. O'Hoolligan.

"Yis," sighed Mrs. Mulcahy, "Danny niver could hould any kind of a job."

The Ruse That Failed.

"Did you let papa win from you as I told you to?"

"Yes; and he said that a man who played such a fool's game should never marry his daughter."

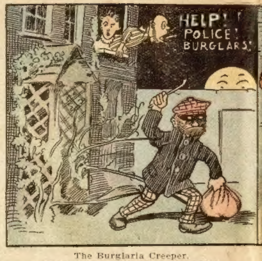
She'll Make It Fly.

Mother—I really think you'd be happier if you married a man who had less money.

Daughter—Don't worry, mother; he will have less in a very short time.

HIGHLY DEVELOPED PLANTS.

From Our Seedman's Illustrated Catalog.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The Burglaria Creeper.
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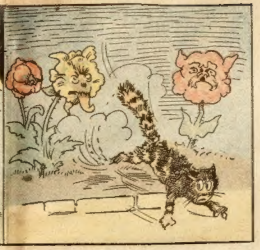
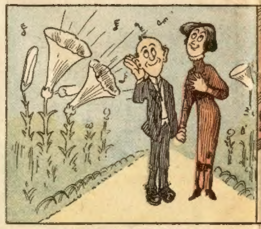
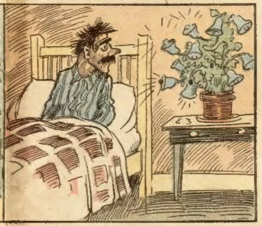


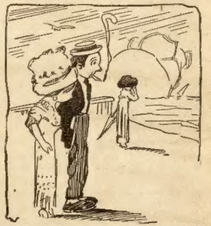
Feliscootum.
Scares away cats—barks like a dog.



The Singing Lily.
Speaks the language of flowers.



Alarum Matutinum.
Variety of the Canterbury Bell.



She—Poor girl! She is so worried about her property.

He—Mortgages on it?

She—No, sunburn—her face is her fortune.

A Sure Way.

One way to avoid publicity and attention is to become a bridegroom.

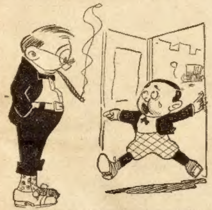
Unfair.

"Talk 'bout railroads bein' a blessin'," said Brother Dickey, "'des look at de loads an' loads er watermelons dey haulin' out de State, ter dem folks 'way up North what never done nuthin' ter desarve sich a dispensation."

Before.

A reporter was interviewing Thomas A. Edison. "And you, sir," he said to the inventor, "made the first talking machine?"

"No," Mr. Edison replied, "the first one was made long before my time—out of a rib."



Willie—Papa, Fido was just hit by a taxi.

Papa—All right, Willie, telephone for a taxidermist.

Conscientious.

"Doctor!" cried the patient, writhing in pain. "I wish I could die and be done with it! Oh, let me die—let me die!"

"Be calm," soothed the physician. "Remember, I am doing my best for you."

Bad Environment.

Young Man (nervously)—There's something about—er—your—daughter I——

Crusty Pa—Yes, there is; I had noticed it myself. It comes every night about eight o'clock and doesn't get away until about eleven. One of these nights I'm going to kick it into the street and see what it is made of.

The Right Kind.

"He is the busiest man I know."

"Yes, he is making a collection of bacteria."

"Why, I never heard that. How queer! What kind is he collecting?"

"The kind that is to be found on money."

An Appeal to Sympathy.

"I made all kinds of excuses to get off to see them play ball this afternoon."

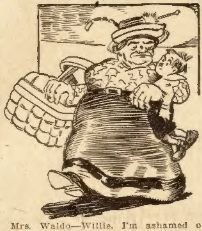
"Wouldn't any of them work?"

"Yes. Finally I touched the boss' heart by telling him I wanted to go to the ball game."

Hates to Give Up.

Howell—Does he take things philosophically?

Powell—Yes, but he doesn't part with them philosophically.



Mrs. Waldo—Willie, I'm ashamed of you! Why didn't you use your table manners at the picnic?

Willie—Why, they wasn't no tables to use 'em on.

Suited the Dog's Taste.

Old Donas shuffled into Robin's grocery store, leading a shambling, mangy cur. "Meester Robine," he addressed the proprietor, "you got no empty barrel o' flour? I wants to make my dog a chicken coop."

An Obstructed Order.

Owens—How do you do, Mr. Shears. What can you show me in the way of a new suit today?

His Tailor—Your bill, sir—that is decidedly in the way of a new suit.

Worth Remembering.

Harold—I know that I'm not worthy of you, my darling.

Fair One—Remember that, Harold, and my married life is sure to be happy.

Was Not Spelling.

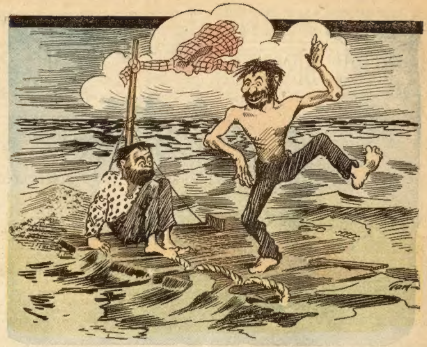
Mother (looking over her boy's shoulder)—Your spelling is perfectly terrible.

Little Son—This isn't a spellin' lesson. It's a composition.

The Bee's Lesson.

School Teacher—What lesson do we learn from the busy bee?

Tommy Tuffnut—Not to get stung.



Jack—I say, Bill, what ye dancin' and yellin' fer? Goin' crazy?
Bill—Hooray! That monthly installment payment on my fool subscription to the encyclopedia was due on the 10th and here I am safe on this raft three days afterward with not a sail in sight.

Regardless of Expense.

"I understand the wedding was very swagger."

"Swagger? The bridesmaids carried shower bouquets of early spring vegetables."

No More.

"Do you drink any more?"

"No. Just about the same amount."

So Many Do.

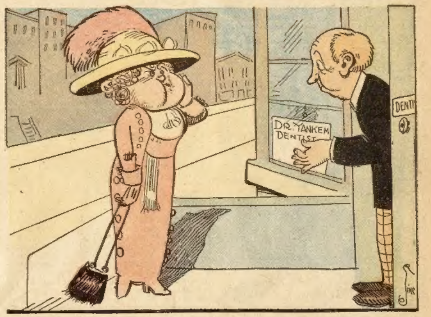
"You certainly started out with fine prospects. Your credit was good everywhere in town."

"That's why I failed."

Matrimonial Amenities.

He—I hate a fool!

She—Well, you are certainly not egotistical.



The Lady—So the doctor has gone for the day? It's too bad; I wanted to see him today!
The Usher—Yes, but I hope you'll still have toothache tomorrow!

Some Time.

"How long have you been out of work?"

"Ever since I lost my poor mother."

"Is that long ago?"

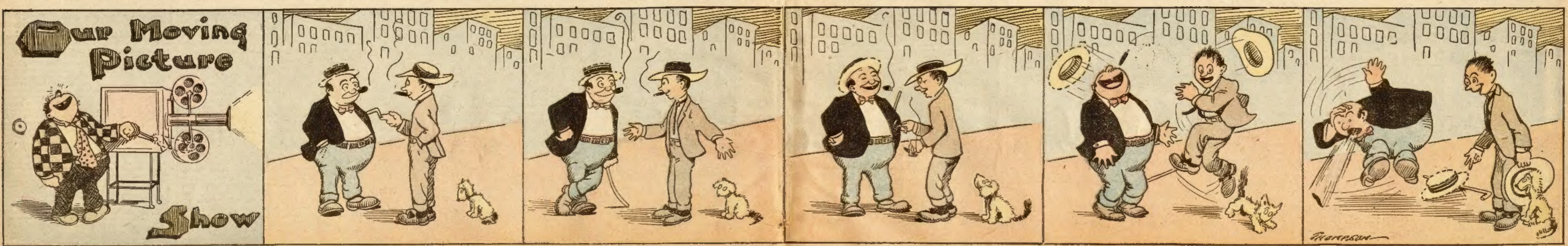
"She died when I was born."

A Difference.

"Are you a favorite son?" asked the visitor of a South American.

"No; I have just been defeated for the presidency. Last year I was a favorite son. This year I am a prodigal son."

A HOT JOKE.



Biggen Fat—You don't say? Well, I declare; what do you think of that now?

"Great joke on Smithy, eh? Some people can't enjoy a joke when it's on them."

"Did he? Ha, ha! Funniest thing I ever heard of! Ha! ha!

"Whee! My cigar burned you, did it? Oh, me! Oh, my! Haw! What a funny accident. Ho, ho, ho!"

(Splutter! Sput!) "Wretch! Villain! Do you think my interior is fireproof? I'll have the law on you for that!"

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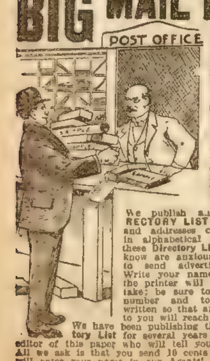

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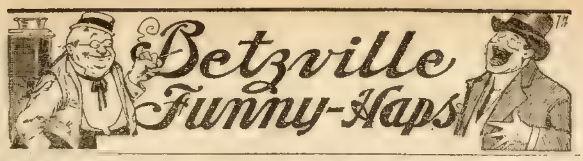


Ebenezer and the Calf

By Ellis Parker Butler

(Copyright by W. G. Chapman.)

THE Reverend Ebenezer Spillgath, of Betzville, is one of the kindest-hearted men in our midst, and organizer of the Betzville Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, of which Aunt Rhinocolura Betz is the other member, but there are some animals it is mighty hard to please.

About a year ago Mr. Spillgath heard a calf bawling in Orone McDooble's barn, and it bawled so sadly that Mr. Spillgath's heart was touched, and he went in and upbraided Orone, but all Orone said was that if the Reverend Spillgath felt that way about it, he could have the plagued calf and welcome, but that as for him, he wasn't going to spend all his time trying to teach a wobbly-legged cow-child to climb trees. So the Reverend Spillgath upbraided Orone a few times for his language, and took the calf home. In less than a year he wished he hadn't.

As soon as he had the calf home he turned it loose in the back yard and went over to Aunt Rhinocolura's to secure a donation for the purpose of improving the happiness of the calf, but when he reached home again the calf was sadder than ever. It was standing before an apple tree with its front feet on the trunk, looking up into the boughs and bawling piteously. It was evident that the calf wanted to climb the tree, and Mr. Spillgath is kind-hearted, so he gave the calf a boost and it scrambled into the crotch of the tree. As soon as it was up it emitted a little bleat of joy, and immediately fell down the other side of the tree and lit on its head. It bawled about that for an hour, and then it got up and turned around and put its fore feet on the tree trunk and bawled to be up in the the tree again. So Mr. Spillgath gave it another boost, and it scrambled up into the crotch and bleated once joyfully, and fell out of the tree on the other side.

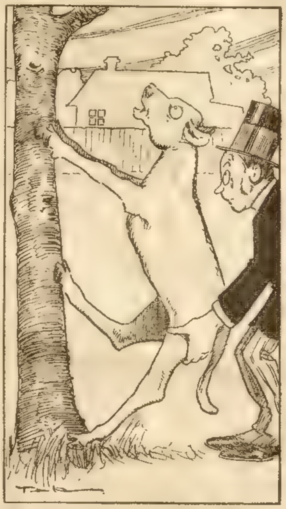
For a week the Reverend Spillgath spent all his time boosting the calf into the tree and seeing it fall out again, but at the end of that time the calf was able to lie in the crotch of the tree with its hind legs hanging down one side of the tree and its fore legs hanging down the other, and it should have been happy, but it wasn't. As soon as it was able to remain in the crotch it began looking toward the upper branches and bawling to be up in them. But as soon as the Reverend Spillgath gave it a boost it fell through the crotch onto its head. It was a sad case of misapplied devotion to an ideal, and Reverend Spillgath went over to Aunt Rhinocolura's and got another contribution out of her for the improvement of the condition of tree-climbing calves.

Oddly enough the cash contributions of Aunt Rhinocolura did not seem to improve the calf in the way of climbing. It remained a mighty poor tree-climber, and no explanations of the art made by Mr. Spillgath helped the calf much. Mr. Spillgath would explain to the calf how to climb the tree, and then he would follow precept with example, and would climb the tree himself, and the calf would look on eagerly, and fairly pant to do it herself, and then Mr. Spillgath would give the calf a boost and it would paw at the tree with its legs and go plunk! through the crotch onto its head. It was a melancholy calf. When it was not bawling to be boosted into the tree it was bawling because it had alighted on its head. In a few weeks it wore out that tree, and Mr. Spillgath had to do his best to boost it into the big elm, and that was pretty hard work, for the crotch of the elm was about twelve feet up. He was obliged to run to Aunt Rhinocolura every day for contributions.

What made it worse was that the calf was growing all the while, and while it is not so bad to boost a calf up a tree, it is a job and a half to boost a cow, and it takes a lot of contributions. Mr. Spillgath had to hire several of his relatives to help him, and they would all take hold of the cow and give her a mighty boost into the crotch of the elm. Sometimes they boosted so hard that they tossed the cow right through the crotch and over the fence into Orone McDooble's yard, but that did not make much difference, for the cow always fell out of the crotch, anyway, sooner or later, and it saved time. When they tossed the cow right over they were able to get her and toss her again all the sooner. When they did not toss, the cow bawled, and when they did toss, she fell with a thud and bawled just the same. And there wasn't anything seemed to interest the cow but tree-climbing.

Except fireworks. The cow was passionately fond of fireworks. Passionately! Reverend Spillgath discovered that the evening of July Fourth. The cow instantly stopped bawling for higher things, as you might say, the moment she saw fireworks. So he went over to Aunt Rhinocolura's and got a big contribution for fireworks, and every evening he had roman-candles or spin wheels or rockets for the cow. She seemed to like spin-wheels the best, but only about one out of a dozen spin-wheels work right, and when they did not work right the cow would lie down and weep piteously.

But you can't use fireworks to advantage during the day. Ebenezer thought of getting a big tent and darkening it, so he could have fireworks for the cow by day, but Aunt Rhinocolura objected. She said she was about contributed to a finish. She remarked, rather sullenly, that beef steak, at least, did not bawl. So Mr. Spillgath did the best he could for a while, but the cow grew worse. She wanted the spin-wheels in the top of the elm tree so she could be climbing the tree and watching the fireworks simultaneously. This really aggravated Reverend Spillgath, although he is one of the kindest-hearted of men, and he said that as Aunt Rhinocolura had ceased her contributions, it was evident to him that this was the kind of cow that would never be happy anywhere but in Heaven. The butcher gave him twenty-eight dollars for the cow. Of course Aunt Rhinocolura did not get any of the twenty-eight dollars, for she was merely a contributing member, but she was allowed to buy all the cow steaks she wanted from the butcher at the regular rate. And Reverend Spillgath's bill for damage to his apple tree was only twenty-eight dollars.



The calf wanted to climb the tree.

Don't let the next funny-hap get by you. Next week's scream will be "Otis Brumpp and the Bull." It is some wheeze.

* * *

Fatal Gift of Beauty.

A few years ago there was a belief that the pretty stenographer found more places open to her than the one of only mediocre attractiveness. But an employer who has a large office force both of men and young women said the other day:

"Experience has taught me that it is unwise to hire an extremely attractive stenographer. I find that she soon becomes the center of admiration for the men clerks. Considerable time is spent in 'jollying,' and if she happens to drop a lead pencil or wants to put on her jacket, every man on the force jumps to help her. This takes too much time, and, besides, I have reason to think that the pretty girl takes more time from office hours for primping than the others."

If it so happened that you were an extremely pretty girl, but in other ways were just like other girls and wanted to earn your living in a dignified way, and could only do it by stenography; if it also happened that you especially wanted to earn money by office work for a couple of years because at the end of that time you expected to marry and wanted to get your trousseau and help along the folks at home beside, what would you say at being turned down because you were pretty?

That is what happened to a girl who tried to get stenographic work in Washington. Her name was Miss Mary Todd and she came from a little country town with its freshness still upon her. She was taken into an office where there were seventeen girls, and at the end of a few weeks she was embarrassed by frequent offers of company and of flowers from different men in the office. It made the other girls her enemies, even though she declined all such attentions, and she finally left and began to look for another job where she could work in peace.

The same experience, in so far as having the girls in the office become jealous of her, happened to a girl in Chicago. Being a sensible girl and caring for the approbation of her companions, she dressed plainly and removed herself as far as possible from any appearance of "showiness." This was not hard, as she had a quiet taste naturally. But the next thing she did required courage. She smoothed back her light brown hair straight from her forehead in a way that was hopelessly old-fashioned. But, as it happened, she was of so unusual a type that this only gave her distinction. Her brow was low and well shaped and the hair line so good that this only served to draw attention to it. Her eyes were a wonderful blue and her teeth perfect, as they were disclosed by the sweetest and most womanly of smiles.

Her little ruse did not hide these things from the more discriminating, but fortunately it worked with the girls in the office, who no longer considered her a rival.

* * *

Rough on the Chair.

A candidate, after addressing a meeting, announced his willingness to answer questions. One elector in the audience said, "Sir, do you think I am worth more than twenty-two shillings a week?"

The candidate, taking a good look at him, replied, "Well, I think, at any rate, you are not getting too much."

"Well, then," demanded the questioner, "do you think I am worth thirty bob a week?"

"Yes," responded the candidate; "I don't think that at all an unreasonable wage for you."

"Then," shouted the elector, triumphantly, "I wish you would tell that to the old skinflint beside you in the chair, because he is my employer."

* * *

Nine Contrasts.

Seldom has there been better advice for the conduct of the human family than is boiled down in nine comprehensive antitheses:

Drink less, breathe more; eat less, chew more; ride less, walk more; clothe less, bathe more; worry less, work more; waste less, give more; write less, read more; talk less, think more; preach less, practice more. To follow these is to strive for better health, further popularity, and greater success.

* * *

A woman isn't necessarily sixty because she talks like it.

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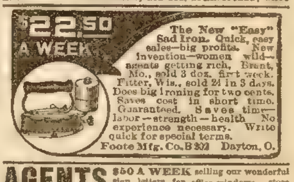

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Stealing an Angel.

(Continued from page two.)

ant, together with a coin to avoid further hindrance. Enchanting strains of music filled the air, a sea of changing and interchanging color met the eye. They were actually at the ball, and Jandorf glanced down at his charge to note her expression. Her cheeks were roses in snow; her eyes blazed. With the dexterity of long usage he made a passage through the crowd to their hostess, Mrs. Dalton Cullen.

"Miss Morland and I apologize for being scandalously late," said he, bowing low over the astonished matron's hand. "But I assure you I made all possible haste."

Leaving their hostess to marvel over a puzzling situation, the two joined the waltzers, and at last Angel's feet kept time to wonderful harmony. She could scarcely believe that she, the heartbroken maid of an hour before, had stepped into that fairyland. Jandorf perceived that the girl's pure beauty, her simplicity of costume, and her evident delight in everything about her were creating a sensation. Across the room he noted two faces petrified with astonishment—and horror. No prompting was needed to tell him that he faced Mrs. Madden and her daughter. After he had launched Angel on an evening of gaiety, he would ask an interview of the former and make his peace. Meanwhile Cecil was eying him in a sort of hypnotized stare. At the end of the waltz he introduced several insistent friends to Angel, and prepared to make report. As he joined Cecil in a retired spot, his watch showed that several minutes of his allotted time still remained.

"My word," said the mystified Cecil, "you're a conundrum! You, the woman hater, start out burglarizing to avoid females; and here you come leading in a sort of divinity, and looking down at her as though you owned her."

"I'm going to," stated Jandorf. "And I've won my wager."

Cecil stared his utter unbelief.

"I can prove it," Jandorf declared, and briefly related the happenings of the night.

"Of all the nerve!" cried Cecil. "So you broke into Paradise!"

Jandorf nodded. "That jimmy's there now," said he.

"But the swag?" demanded Cecil. "You were to steal something of value."

"I did," said Jandorf. "I stole an Angel."

* * *

The Detective Barrier.

(Continued from page nine.)

thinking it would be in his barnyard. We utterly failed to find it. There's the whole explanation of that walk. If I'd found the heifer I would have been pretty near a thief, in the eyes of the law, and I've not aspired to confess that I had such designs. I can prove all this by the man I hired to help. Coming home I stumbled upon Kendall's body. Would I have gone right to Carter if I'd done Kendall harm?"

The devices of criminals are many, and the detective passed the point by without comment.

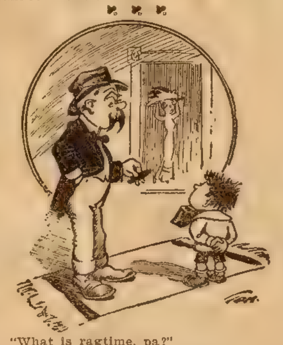
"Except for that walk you were not out that evening, you say?"

"I was not," insisted Jasper, but his gaze fell.

"How about the revolver you dropped by Pottson's fence?"

The conclusion of this interesting story will be found in the Ledger issue of next week. If you are not a regular subscriber to the Ledger we would like to have your name on our list. The Ledger is only $1.00 per year and we have stories awaiting publication that you cannot afford to miss.

* * *



"What is ragtime, pa?"

"It is the time when I have to wear all my old clothes in order that your mother may get a new hat."

* * *

Signs of the Times.

When You See—

A large mass of velvet decorated with waving willow plumes, and pink feathers, and buckles, and chiffon, and what not come along the street, it is a sign there's a woman under it.

A broad-shouldered, slim-waisted beauty drop her purse in the street car and look anxiously about for some kind party to pick it up for her, it is a sign she has her hobble skirt on.

A man down a cellar looking for the leak in the gas pipe with the aid of a lighted match, it is a sign he is going to find it.

A very badly frightened man and an overjoyed woman marching up the aisle to the tune of "Tum, tum-te tum," it is a sign of a wedding.

A man put sugar and cream in his soup at a public dinner, it is a sign he is not what might be called an urbanite.

A woman go into a telephone booth and talk twenty-eight miuntes to a dear lady friend in the next street at an expense of about fifty cents, it is a sign she hasn't said a word worth listening to.

A man sitting in a street car suddenly jump up and offer a homely looking 300-pound woman his seat, smiling at the same time with the expression of a dying gladiator, it is a sign she has just stepped on his foot.

A man with all his hair growing south of his ears going to sleep in the theater, it is a sign the performance is not musical comedy.

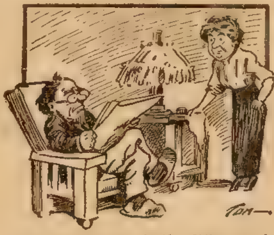
A man run gayly or noisily up the steps of his home at 4:15 a. m., it is a sign he is single or his wife's away.

A young woman lying in a hammock, with her dress tucked about her feet, her arm under her cheek, her face flushed, her lily-white hand drooping gracefully down, and her eyes closed, it is a sign she is wide awake and expecting someone.

A man and woman dining out and having a perfectly glorious and happy time of it, smiling sweetly at each other all the time, it is a sign they are married.

P. S.—But not to each other.

* * *



Wife—John, what is the difference between direct taxation and indirect taxation?

Husband—Why, the difference between your asking me for money and going through my trousers while I'm asleep.

* * *

A Georgia Snake Story.

A Georgia paper says: "A rattlesnake eight feet long, with fifteen rattles, chased a horse a quarter of a mile, striking at him all the time. The horse ran at the top of his speed, dragging a wagon with a little boy in it. The snake finally gave up the chase."

It has been a great year for snake stories, but this one beats all the rest. It will be observed that the person in the wagon was "a little boy." This we can readily believe, and we think that several feet of the snake's greath length may be attributed to the little boy's imagination. It seems equally clear that had the boy been still smaller the snake would have been even longer, for the very small boy sees danger through eyes of vast magnifying power. On the whole, we fear that this latest and biggest of snake stories is a little too extravagant for human credulity.

* * *

A Disgusted Creditor.

The tradesman had rendered his bill, waited a month, and then wrote: "Please, sir, I want my bill."

Back came the bill, with these words: "Certainly. Here it is."

The bill was returned, and in a month the tradesman again wrote: "Kindly send me the amount of my bill."

And the answer came promptly and politely: "Certainly. It is seventeen dollars and fifty-two cents."

The third month the tradesman again wrote: "Will you send me a check for the amount of my bill?"

The answer came, with a blank, unsigned check: "Certainly. Here is a check. I have kept the amount of your bill."

The fourth month the tradesman wrote: "I want my bill paid."

And the answer came back: "So do I."

Then the tradesman gave it up.

* * *

Not What She Expected.

"Tell me, doctor, what do people say about our unhappy marriage?"

"It's strange, but your husband doesn't get much sympathy."

"That's nice. But what do they say about him?"

"Well, they say it served him right that he hadn't married some other woman."

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Others offer to build up your figure with drugs, greasy skin foods, creams, dieting, massage and expensive instruments and devices. I have done away with all these injurious methods and have given a legion of women a luxuriant natural development by a treatment never before offered the public. No massaging, nothing to take, nothing to wear.

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I don't care what your age may be, I ask only that you be at least sixteen and not an invalid, and I will undertake to develop your bust in two weeks. All I ask is five or ten minutes of your time every day.

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Chicago Ledger

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GENTLE JABS.

When the cats play the mice get away.

Too many people mistake gall for genius.

Time will tell—if a woman doesn't beat time to it.

That tired feeling and the fishing fever are hereditary.

It's a bad sign to write your name on a friend's note.

A wise man is merely less of a fool than the average.

And a kiss in the dark is one kind of an electric spark.

A cat has no time to look at a king if a mouse is in sight.

It's better to stay out than to get married and fall out.

Even the "has been" never forgets the day when he was "IT."

Many a man mistakes the echo of his own voice for applause.

Work is better for most people than most people are for work.

There's no place like home—and some married men are glad of it.

Every woman is a born actress—yet only a few go on the stage.

And many a man who started with cold feet has made a hot finish.

Our idea of a truly great man is one who can keep the lid on his grouch

Even if a woman can't afford a new hat, she can criticise her neighbor's.

Many a woman's good judgment shows up when she leaves it to her husband.

You may have noticed that nearly all stand pat politicians occupy comfortable seats.

Some brands of reform make the world better, and some make it more uncomfortable.

Just because a married man does what his wife tells him to do is no sign that he wants to do it.

How easy it is to think you would head the list of philanthropists if you only had the money!

Women are not necessarily mathematicians because they attempt to make their own figures count.

Instead of hiding his light under a bushel nowadays, the average man mistakes his little one candle flame for an arc light.

Every man has a theory about marriage, but after facing the parson with his ideal woman he finds it is a condition and not a theory that confronts him.

Yost Middleton's Wife.

(Continued from page six.)

questions that intrude upon your reasons for wanting this man. I believe that those reasons are paramount above all things."

"They are a part of my life!" cried Edith Middleton. "Not until I have reached the end of my trail shall I think of anything else. Then the world shall judge Edith Middleton. Spurned, cast off because of the crime of this one wretch, branded an unfaithful wife, flung upon the breakers of obloquy, tortured by lies that show no mercy, I stand today before an unpitying world. Judge me as you will M. Legeorge. Believe, as you may, that Yost Middleton had a right to tear me from his heart. Brand me with all the infamy that a woman's sin deserves; but find for me this one man!'

She laid her hand on the doorknob and looked back at the mystified sleuth with eyes that seemed to burn their way to the depths of his soul. Never had he seen a woman like Edith Middleton. Her last look seemed to hypnotize him; he tried to repeat his pledge that he would find the man she wanted, but his tongue failed him, and whilst he stood like one in a dream, he heard the patter of her feet on the stair.

Next week's Ledger will contain further chapters of this fine story. You will find it interesting to the end. We will give you constantly the very best stories of entertainment that money will buy, so send in your subscription and take the Ledger regularly, if you are not doing so. You will not regret it.

* * *

Ten Commandments.

I think the essential points of a happy and successful married life are respect, unselfishness, affection, love of home, companionship, liberality of views, and above all, a thorough understanding of character. These points are essential on the part of both: Do not expect to give that which you are unwilling to take. Do not pout, and nothing is so distasteful to a man as nagging. Be above little things and strive to live up to the vow, "for better or for worse until death do us part." Thus a Chicago woman expressed herself in an article written for the Tribune.

Were I to have the opportunity of choosing a companion again I do not think I could better my condition in the least except from a financial standpoint. I am contented that I have drawn a capital prize in the lottery of life and follow these ten commandments:

1. Thou shalt love no other man but him.
2. Thou shalt not make to thyself any ideal, for thy husband is a jealous creature and thou shalt not arouse his passion.
3. Thou shalt not speak to thy husband in tones unbecoming a lady, but thou shalt always address him kindly.
4. Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day, six days shalt thou labor and do all thou hast to do, but the seventh is the Sabbath; thou shalt don thy nicest attire and entertain the husband as thou didst the lover.
5. Honor thy father-in-law and thy mother-in-law that thy days may be peaceful.
6. Thou shalt not kill the affection of thy husband by continued fault finding. Pet him if thou wish to be petted by him.
7. Thou shalt serve him three square meals a day if thou possibly can.
8. Thou shalt not steal money from his trousers pockets. Thou knowest his financial ability and act accordingly.
9. Thou shalt treat thy husband as thy equal and work for his interest.
10. Thou shalt not disturb thy husband's pipes, nor his morris chair, nor anything in his den. Thou shalt endeavor to make his home a pleasant one that thou may bear with pleasure the name which he has given thee.

* * *

The Porter's Retort.

Four traveling salesmen were in a train going North, and had to change at a roadside station far from any sign of refreshment. One of the number whiled away the time by chaffing the solitary porter. He had been at this game for some time, when the porter's turn came.

"I say," asked the funny salesman, "why did they build the station so far away from the village?"

"I don't know," replied the porter gravely, "unless they thought it would be more convenient to have it down here near the railroad."

* * *

Sense of Humor.

A story is told about a widow living in one of the fine homes of Lake Forest. She called her butler to her one morning and said:

"I want you to tell George (the coachman) that his children must cease making so much noise at eleven o'clock at night. I cannot sleep because of it."

The butler departed solemnly and delivered the message to George, who received it without fear and trembling and without punishing his offspring.

"My children didn't make any noise last night at eleven o'clock," he said. "They were in bed by seven o'clock and never got out of it."

So the butler informed the widow. The next night about the same hour the noise was repeated and the mistress, in indignation, summoned the coachman himself and told him that his children must be making the noise and must stop.

"They ain't making the noise," said George with conviction. "But I know what is. I've been turning a colt out in the field back of the house. Our chickens refuse to go into their neat little chicken shed, but instead roost on the fence rails of the pasture. Every night the colt comes up when they are asleep and pulls their tail feathers with his mouth and they squawk. He gets lots of fun out of it."

* * *

Rousing the Boy.

"The boy is all right," said the doctor, "but you want to talk to him and arouse his ambition. Promise him that you will take him somewhere when he recovers sufficiently to go out—to a vaudeville show, for instance; talk to him about playing with the boys; there are lots of ways in which you can interest him."

Then the doctor addressed the boy, who was just recovering from a fever, saying:

"Come, Tommy, cheer up, my boy; wouldn't you like to go and play with your schoolmates?"

A faint smile stole over the boy's face, but that was all.

"Stop, sir," said the father; "I'll rouse him. See here, Tommy," he asked, addressing the boy, "wouldn't you like to go out and throw a stone through Mother Bibb's candy-shop window?"

The boy immediately sat up in bed and asked for his clothes.

"I thought that 'u'd rouse the boy," said the father, with a proud smile. "He's all right, doctor."

* * *

The Champion Liar.

An old negro in Mississippi was on trial for stealing chickens. He had denied his guilt, and one of the deacons of his church was called to testify to his reputation for truth and veracity.

"Now, deacon," said the prosecutor, "do you know this defendant?"

"Yes, sir."

"How well do you know him?"

"Oh, I know him tahlable well."

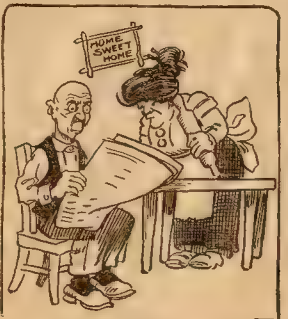
"What is his reputation for truth and veracity in the neighborhood in which he lives?"

The old man looked thoughtful for a minute.

"You know what I mean," continued the lawyer. "Does he tell the truth? Can he tell the truth? Do his neighbors believe what he says?"

"That niggah tell the truth? Does anybody believe him? Why, mistah lawyah, when that niggah wants to call his hawgs at feedin' time he has to git somebody else to holler foh him."

* * *



Mrs. Windrow—Wasn't I a handsome girl?

Windrow—It isn't fair to ask me that with a rolling pin in your hand.

* * *

Really Important Thing.

Aged Suitor—It is true that I am considerably older than you, but a man is as young as he feels, you know, and——

Miss Pert—Oh, that doesn't matter. What I want to know is if you are as rich as you look?

* * *

Free Asthma and Hay Fever Cure.

D. J. Lane, a chemist at 115 Lane Bldg., St. Marys, Kansas, manufactures a remedy for asthma and hay fever in which he has so much confidence that he sends a $1 bottle by express to any one who will write him for it. His offer is that he is to be paid for it if it cures, and the one taking the treatment is to be the judge.

* * *

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AGENTS—Big money distributing free pkgs. Borax-ee Soap Powder. B. W. Ward & Co., 1770 Berteau, Chicago.

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AGENTS—$3 to $10 daily fitting glasses; big profits; our 24-page Free eye book tells how; write today. Jacksonian Optical College, McCormick Block, Chicago.

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AGENTS—150 per cent profit selling New Standard Fibre Brooms, metal base, replaces corn brooms, guaranteed to outwear four, sells to every house-wife; always repeats. Free sample. Poggensee Brush Co., 215 Marine Bldg., Chicago.

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FITS—I cured my daughter. Doctors gave her up. Will send Free. Give express office. A. Lepso, Milwaukee, Wis.

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Companions in Misfortune.

Robbed—I do pray of you to give me my things back. My wife will kill me if I go home without them.

Robber—Sorry, I'm married myself, but what do you suppose my wife will do if I go home without anything?

ANECDOTES OF PEOPLE

Something for Nothing.

Upton Sinclair was talking at a dinner in New York about the recent imprisonment of the notorious English promoter, Ernest Hooley.

"What's a Hooley?" asked, from the end of the table, a young Westerner who had only caught a word or two of Mr. Sinclair's argument.

"I'll show you what a Hooley is," said the novelist; and he continued with a smile:

"A Britisher, one Easter, called on a milkman and said:

"'How would you like to celebrate the day with an egg-nogg?'

"'Bully! Going to treat?'

"'Well, I'll supply the eggs and liquor, if you'll supply the nogg—the milk, I mean, along with the sugar and spices.'

"'Agreed,' was the reply.

"Then the Britisher called on a dairyman.

"'How would you like to celebrate with an egg-nogg?'

"'Bully!' said the dairyman

"'Will you supply the eggs if I supply the liquor, milk, sugar and spices?'

"'Sure.'

"Next the Britisher called on a liquor dealer.

"'Will you join in an egg-nogg if I supply everything but the liquor?'

"'Why, yes, of course—gladly,' the liquor dealer said

"And so, that evening, these four men gathered about a superb egg-nogg. As they drank it, they told what part of it each had supplied. Thus the milk man had supplied the milk, the dairyman the eggs, the saloon man the stiffening

"'But you,' they asked, turning to the fourth celebrant, 'where do you come in?'

"'Where do I come in?' the Britisher answered indignantly. 'Where do I come in? Why, I'm the Hooley!'"

❧

No Choice.

Hubert Latham, the Antoinette flyer, was talking at a tea to a pretty California girl.

"Mr. Latham," said the girl as she took her nineteenth walnut and lettuce sandwich, "tell me, does flying require any particular application?

"Well, no, none in particular," Mr. Latham answered. "Arnica or horse liniment—one's as good as another."

❧

Unhappy Jane.

"Poor Jane is in despair."

"What is the matter with Jane?"

"Why, she has just begun to realize that she's too fat for an actress and not fat enough for a prima donna."

❧

Sold on the Poker Plan.

A Cleveland shoe store has been conducting a bargain sale in men's shoes. In each pair of shoes in the show window there are three new $1 bills and the sign reads: "Three of a kind take one pair."

The $3 shoes have been going rapidly. Saturday, however, a big young man entered the store and asked: "Do you sell these shoes according to poker rules, as advertised?"

"Yes, sir," answered the clerk, who had played a bit himself.

"Good. I wear a No. 9. Wrap me up two pair of them."

He received the shoes and handed over $3.

"Excuse me," said the clerk, "those shoes come to $6. You took two pair."

"That's all right," said the young man; "but three of a kind beat two pair."

"I know that," responded the clerk, promptly, "but three of a kind don't beat four nines." The customer paid.

❧ ❧ ❧

A CURE FOR RUPTURE

Success Attained at Last—How Trusses May Be Thrown Aside.

Those who are afflicted with hernia and who have been compelled to wear torturing trusses, will be pleased to learn that a valuable and interesting book has been issued, of which a copy will be sent free to any rupture sufferer who writes to its author, Dr. Rice, 1045-N Main Street, Adams, N. Y. It tells you how a person may be speedily and lastingly rid of rupture in any form and gives much other important advice of true worth.

Sickened the Owl.

"I love you, darling, more than you love me," sighed the swain.

"Ah, that is impossible, precious," she whispered back, "for I love you better than you do me!"

"You cannot!"

"But I do!"

"You do not!" he argued.

"When I say a thing I stick to it!" she snapped.

An owl shifted uneasily above them.

"Pardon me, Gwendoline!"

"Pardon me, Eustace!"

"Miss Brown!"

"Mr. Jones!"

The owl hooted dismally, and sought another bower.

❧

Who Was the Culprit?

The teacher was very earnest—far more so than his pupils—and the subject he chose was about the terrible outcome of laziness and idleness.

With due solemnity, as befitted the occasion, he drew a terrible picture of the habitual loafer, the man who dislikes work.

"Now, Charlie," said the teacher to a little boy who had been looking out of the window instead of attending closely to the lesson.

Charlie was instantly on the alert.

"Tell me," continued the master, "who is the miserable individual who gets clothes, food, and lodging and yet does nothing in return?"

Charlie's face brightened.

"Please, sir," said he, "the baby!"

❧

A Poverty-Stricken Inn.

"I should like a roast chicken and some asparagus," was the request of an automobilist at a small hotel in New Hampshire.

The waiter gloomily shook his head, and declared that the order could not be executed.

"Can I have a duck, then?"

"No, sir."

"Have you any mutton chops?"

"Not one, sir."

"Well, if you have nothing to eat, bring me a drink. Have you any wine in the place?"

"Sir," replied the waiter, with a profound sigh, "we are out of wine."

"Then, in the name of all that's refreshing, what have you got in the house?"

"The sheriff, sir!" replied the waiter.

❧

The Issue.

He had just asked the all-important question; and as she gazed dreamily into space, he knew that his life's happiness rested in her answer. Slowly—slowly—she turned her head; his pulses quickened. "Will you answer me one question?" she asked in a tense voice.

"Y-e-s," he responded breathlessly, leaning forward to catch the precious words.

"Why," she asked in a whisper—"why, when I doubled that no trump—did—you—lead—me—a—club?"

❧

A Careful Man.

At the Canadian Society dinner recently James Bryce, British ambassador to the United States, commented upon the badges worn by the presidents of sister societies. The badges, he thought, were excellent, because he could tell who the wearers were. That reminded him, he said, of the story about the American and the Englishman. The latter remarked that English mayors always wore a gold chain as a badge of office and asked the American how he knew his own mayor.

"Oh, I don't want to," was the reply.

❧

Among the Accidents.

Amateur Tenor—That's odd: I can't find any account of my singing at the Swellmore's musicale last evening.

His Friend—Where did you look for it?

Amateur Tenor—Among the musical notes, of course.

His Friend—It might be in the paper after all. Why not try in some other department?

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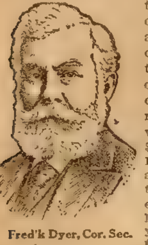

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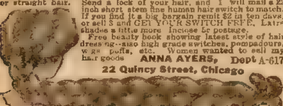

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Or, Frank Coke's Bravery

By William Ressman Andrews

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CHAPTER VIII.

SHOWING THEIR HANDS.

ON REACHING the house, Tom and Frank went to their room. The two discussed the sight which had aroused their suspicions.

"I feel sure of their being some of the gang," said Tom, emphatically. "Although they were too far away for a clear view of their features, I thought I recognized two of the men."

"That's why you wanted us to get away as soon as possible?"

"Yes; won't do for them to suspect that some one is on the island who knows them," said Blakely.

"Well, what shall we do?"

"We could go back and watch them tonight, but I hardly think it worth while now," said Tom. "They probably have gone to their hiding-place and left by this time."

"Then it looks as if they have a cache," said Frank. "If you don't think so, you wouldn't take the chance of their getting away now?"

"Exactly."

"It must seem as if they have left the other island you know about," said Frank.

"Well, partly. Perhaps it isn't wholly deserted. Of course, if they go back to the cave to see what happened to me, they will know that I've escaped."

"And in that case, they will know that you will be on their track at the old haunts," said Frank. "Looks to me as if they expect you and a host of deputies to conduct a raid at any moment, and have started to look for another place, more secure."

"Guess you're right," assented Blakely. "But while they will undoubtedly leave the old island, they will eventually seek to make another deserted isle their headquarters. They might know that sooner or later somebody would stumble on them here—just by accident, if nothing more."

"Well, then tomorrow night, perhaps, they will be back, and I suppose you'll be near-by watching them?" asked Frank.

"That's just it," said Tom.

This closed the matter for the night, and they went to sleep.

The following evening, after supper, Frank and Tom made an excuse to go out for a walk alone.

They directed their footsteps to the boat's landing-spot, and hid in a clump of thick bushes. Tom had not expected, with all his suspicions, that on the night before, the smugglers would come right out in the white-sheeted moonlight, and take chances of being seen unloading contraband goods from their boat. But now when the moon was not expected up for some time he felt that the boat would stealthily make its appearance.

In this he was right. The watchers were not obliged to wait long. Presently they heard a noise above that of the waters. It was the grating of a keel on the pebbly beach several yards below them. "They have come," whispered Blakely. "If we can only get an idea of where the cache is and what they put in it."

It was hardly advisable for them just then to leave their hiding-place and expose themselves to capture. The two watchers were unarmed, and they knew that the smugglers were each walking arsenals.

"All we can do is to keep still and find out as much as possible with our eyes and ears," said Tom.

Frank's attention that moment was taken with the sound of footsteps coming near them. "Hark!" he whispered, clutching Tom's arm.

Both listened. Sure enough, the smugglers were coming their way. If the moon had come out then the two would have lost. But fortunately they had rightly calculated that orb's time, and felt secure in the intervening darkness.

Two of the eight men that had been in the boat the previous night came so near that Frank and Tom could almost hear them breathe on the other side of the shrubs, no more than four feet in thickness. Indeed, it was too close for comfort to such gentry when the young men were helpless in the matter of firearms.

One man had spoken to his partner.

"We can't meet here very much longer," he said. "You know there's a farmhouse a mile and a half from here."

"Yes; what about it?" was the question.

"Just this. It would be our luck to have some one stumble across the goods left hereabouts."

"We could have one of the gang guarding the things."

The other man uttered an oath.

"Why, that would be a dead giveaway," he said.

"How so?"

"Don't you see?" he said impatiently. "If a man is seen staying in one place like this, doing nothing, people will suspect him of more than idling."

"You're right."

"Of course I'm right," growled the other. "Ain't I always right?"

"Sure thing, you are," assented the other in mollifying tones.

"Yes; you see I was right in another thing the chief didn't harken to."

"You mean——"

The man took the words out of his companion's mouth.

"Yes; I mean going away and leaving that confounded detective hanging by his neck without making sure he was dead."

"Does look as if it was a bad break."

"Bad break, there's no name for it!" said the other, testily. "Why, what did we find on going back after the tide was out? You know as well as I do. The rascal wasn't there. Somebody rescued him. Now the chap is no doubt hot on our trail again. Why, he might be right here listening to every word we're saying."

Frank gasped with amazement at the coincidence when he heard the last of the smuggler's remarks. Sure enough, the detective was listening to the man's every word.

"Well," thought Frank, "that shows that truth is stranger than fiction. If I'd read in a story book about a fellow making a remark when he supposed him miles away, and that the man mentioned was listening, I would take it with a grain of salt."

The smuggler continued: "It's all right to devise an ingenious torture for a detective trying to down us and prevent good men like ourselves from making a living; but it ain't safe, as this fizzle has shown, to go away and leave a man alive when he ought to be dead."

The other man agreed with the speaker. "Better luck next time we catch him," he said.

"Yes; if we do," said the other, gloomily. "He ain't easily caught. We had our chance; and there's no tellin' when the next one will come, if it does at all."

"You never can tell," said his companion. "If he comes snooping around again we'll have a chance, and don't you forget it."

"Do you suppose the chief would fix him the moment the detective fell into his hands, or do some fool stunt like the last one?"

"There's no telling what the chief will do," said the other man. "I know one thing."

"What's that?"

"He's so pig-headed that if some one should suggest one thing he would do the opposite, just to have his own way."

The other man growled out an oath. "That's what's the matter with the chief," he said. "Many a time he has got the bunch in bad just by being contrary. He ought not to think so such of his touchy pride, but consider what is the best thing for everybody."

"That's horse sense," said the other. "You do git off something good once in a while."

"You don't say!" sneered the other. "Well, some one in this outfit must get off a bit of wisdom occasionally. Of course, it always ought to come from your lips."

The only reply was an oath, and it seemed for a second or two that there might be a fight between the two smugglers. Anyway, it was prevented by some more of the men running up. One of them called out softly, and said that they were wanted by the chief. The two followed the third man toward the beach.

"Shall we get near enough to learn what's in the wind?" asked Frank, the moment the men were out of earshot.

"Yes; although it will be dangerous."

"We're used to danger by this time," said Frank, quietly.

"Indeed, yes," returned Tom, brought to a sudden realization of what they both had passed through. Blakely had not given vent to any cowardly feelings when he spoke. He had in mind Frank's safety. But the next instant he dismissed the idea, as he knew that the young fellow was fully able to take care of himself. However, it was tempting Providence to take chances of getting in the clutches of these unscrupulous villains.

They crept forth, moving so noiselessly that not a twig broke under the weight of their shoes. Softly they glided toward the spot selected by the chief to talk to his followers. The boys were guided by the sound of the man's voice. It was pitch dark, and they could not see a hand before their faces.

CHAPTER IX.

TREACHEROUS PLOTS.

The eight smugglers were gathered around in a circle near the edge of the woods, and the two listeners got as near as they dared.

Mrs Mary Bogart
Mrs Blondeau
Mrs Chas. Bauer
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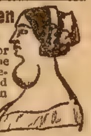

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"Well, what's on the tapis, Moke?" asked one of the men.

"Yes; tell us, chief, what's doing," chimed in another.

So the chief's name was Moke, thought Frank.

The leader spoke up.

"Since that galoot of a detective got away, we ain't safe in the old place," said Moke.

"Yes; that's so, chief," said one of his followers.

"And we got to find a more secure hiding-place," went on the leader.

"Got some spot in mind?" asked one of the eight.

"Yes; since we have decided that there are too many people on this island."

"Where is it?"

All bent forward to listen. And Frank and Tom were no less eager to learn the name of the new hiding-place than the rest of the gang itself.

"Cosmos Island," replied the chief.

A murmur of approbation went up. Evidently all the men knew it, and considered the island well suited for their purposes. Blakely was familiar with its location and desolate condition. Bleak and barren, it was situated in an out-of-the-way part of the coast. Nothing on the island had any attraction for the most curious of sailors and yachtsmen. The fishermen long ago had decided it held no attractions for them, not even for a haven in times of storm. Its three-mile coast line was serrated with a formidable mass of jagged rocks, a constant menace to any craft, even in calm weather.

As Blakely remembered, one small inlet the length of a whale boat gave access to a bit of sandy landing-place. He had been to the island in the past. He now wondered why the smugglers had not singled it out before for their purposes. The interior was nothing but rocks, sandy dunes. Not a blade of grass grew anywhere.

"It ought to be called Chaos instead of Cosmos Island," reflected Blakely, in recollection of its unfavorable appearance.

He also recalled another island situated not more than a quarter of a mile from its channel. This islet was just a spur measuring about two hundred yards in length by fifty in width.

Blakely also remembered that at one end of the islet was a good sized mound of bowlders. Nature had piled the rocks just a little higher than the gunwale of a ship's cutter. If drawn up on the beach and concealed close to the rocks on the far side, it could not be seen from Cosmos Island. All this passed swiftly through Blakely's mind the moment he heard the name of the gang's new headquarters.

Furthermore, the place was not more than three miles from the island on which they were now. Its proximity perhaps explained why fishermen never attempted to dare the rocks of Cosmos in a storm.

The murmuring approbation of the smugglers subsided, and they began to ask questions concerning the removal from their present location.

"Right now," returned the chief. "We ain't got much stuff here."

"That makes it easier than it would a week from now," said one of the men.

"Sure thing," responded the leader. "When the Continental sails in with the load of stuff for us to git ashore, it would be too much work to shift it to two caches before running it under the noses of the revenue cutters."

Tom Blakely's heart gave a thump of joy on hearing this. He had waited a long while to learn of a specified time when the smugglers intended to meet a vessel and make a big haul. At last he knew enough of the smugglers' plans to regulate his own. He only hoped that they would disclose more, for his further guidance. Fortunately he was not disappointed. He learned a few minutes later that the Continental would stand off Hank's Island six days hence, waiting for the smugglers to give their signal.

The leader, Moke, then went on to tell his followers what he intended to do. When the ship hove in sight off the point where they were now holding their council, the skipper would send off a rocket. Moke then would row out and get aboard. He intended to pilot the vessel to Cosmos Island, where the rest of the gang would be already, waiting to receive the ship's cargo.

"And now, my lads," he cried, heartily, "let's get to work at this cache here. We want to transfer the goods before daylight."

The men fell away from the circle. Some ran to the boat. Presently they returned with lighted lanterns and spades. The sight of the lanterns warned Frank and Tom to get back into the bushes quite a distance from the beach.

The retreat was made just in time. The rays of the lanterns cast a luminous flood over quite an area. Then the lights suddenly disappeared from the beach. The men began the task of loading the boat from the contents of the cache in a methodical way born of long practice, and the sudden "dousing of the glim," was part of the program.

Two began digging in the sand where all had been gathered a moment before. Here the lanterns were set down. Three men went severally up and down the beach and in the woods. Their business was to raise the alarm on the approach of strangers. The others not engaged in digging carried in relay the boxes and bags as they were unearthed. The men acting as carriers took their loads to the boat in the dark. It would not have been advisable for them to expose the effulgent rays of a lantern on the wide expanse of beach where it could be seen off in the distance. The men digging were in a grove, and the trunks of the trees shut off the light of the lanterns. Only a person very near would be able to discover people stirring in that locality.

Frank and Tom were in a concealed place where they were able to take in everything without being seen, if they exercised a fair amount of caution. Peering from the leaves of the bushes they saw the two men working away with might and main. The hole got quite deep before anything was taken from it.

"Things have been put way under," said Frank in a whisper. "The smugglers didn't intend to have some straggler who might be killing time by poking holes in the sand with a stick, come along and accidentally discover the goods we see the men digging up now."

At length one of the spades struck an object with a sharp ring. The digger stopped and bent over the hole. An exclamation passed his lips, and he gave a sharp look at his companion. No one else was around at the time. The carriers had just left.

"What is it?" asked the other man.

"The box the boss keeps his money in," said the other.

"Well, what about it?"

"Pity it's all his," insinuated the other.

"Eh, what's that?"

"Not so loud, you fool," hissed the first digger.

The other man leaned over and shot a keen glance into his companion's face. Then he spoke.

"I git you, 'bo," he said. "Yer don't think all this coin is good for the boss to have."

"You git me, all right," returned the other. "I'm glad to see yer can see a thing when it's big enough to show on a moving-picture screen."

"Sh-h, here comes one of the boys back again," said his companion, ignoring the sarcasm. "Throw a shovelful of dirt on the box."

The "box" was a small safe about a foot across and a foot and a half long—about a load for a strong man to carry. It was Moke's private property, and there existed among his thievish crew a tradition of its containing negotiable bonds, in which he had invested his ill-gotten gains derived from his smuggling ventures. Also, it was supposed to hold considerable ready money in bills of large and small denominations. Moke was one of those individuals found in all ranks of honest and dishonest people, who distrust banks, and feel their money is safer under the guardianship of their own vigilant eyes and strong right arms.

Hastily the man threw enough earth over the box to shield it from sight of the returning carriers. Other boxes however, were brought to the surface and handed to the men.

The moment they got out of sight, the two diggers, Pete and Dick by name, reached down and took up the safe in their arms. Quickly they got out of the circling light of the lanterns and threw it into the bushes.

Frank and Tom looked on with absorbing interest. Here was treason in the ranks of the smugglers. And the in-

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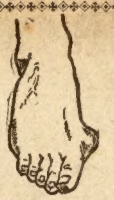
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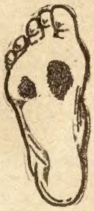
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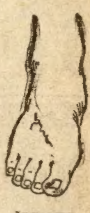
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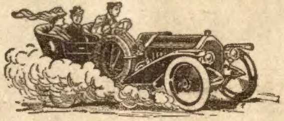

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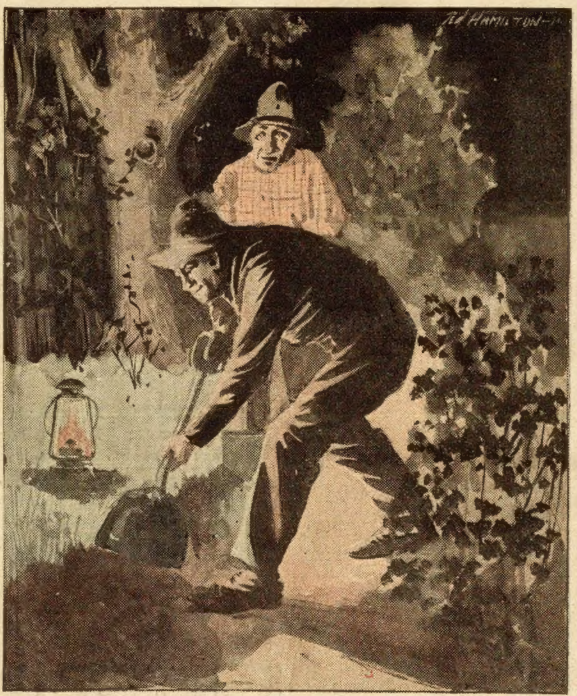

The two began digging in the sand.

stigator, it was then learned, was the man they first overheard complaining of his advice being refused by the leader. Evidently he felt piqued, and now the sight of so much money had given him the idea of enriching himself at the chief's expense, and at the same time enabling him to stick the prod of vengeance into Moke's sore spot. This was in his mind, when presently Pete, who seemed to be the leader of the two—the dissenting spirit of the former occasion—uttered a coarse, low chuckle.

"Better not crow till we corral the iron men in the captain's kick," cautioned the other. "We ain't got away with it. And say, suppose you know that taking the box will mean the end of our brilliant career with this bunch?"

"Quit yer kiddin'," said Pete. "Want to make me feel down-hearted, like I was going away leavin' all my friends forever and ever, as the story books say? Sure thing, we'll stop travelin' with these here fellers; and no regrets from yours trooly—if you and me can get away with all that good money."

"Well, this is the limit!" thought Frank. "There certainly is no honor among these thieves. One would think that these villains would feel the necessity of sticking together. But no, the moment that some of them see a chance to give the others in the gang the double-cross, they do it."

Some of his thoughts must have reached Tom, for Blakely whispered:

"They don't stick to each other like brothers. Well, what's one man's meat is another man's poison. Now, it might be that Pete's betrayal will result to our advantage."

He stopped suddenly. Frank did not dare to ask any questions just then, for some of the carriers returned for another load. After they left, Dick asked his Judas partner what means would be taken to lull Moke's suspicions.

"He will notice the loss of the box the first thing," said Dick, apprehensively. "What will yer have to say to that?"

"A whole lot, yer idiot!" was the testy reply. "Ain't nothin' occurred to yer to say? Where's yer wits? Gee, but if yer always stumped for an answer in a tight place, yer will never come out of a shady deal with all yer buttons on yer coat, I can tell yer that!"

This aroused Dick to a feeling of resentment.

"Yer trying to make out yer so smart, but I notice a fair question don't get no fair answer," he said.

CHAPTER X.

PETE'S TRICK.

The coversation was again interrupted by the coming of carriers. Frank and Tom waited interestedly to hear Pete's reply. Both knew that he must realize the dangers of discovery in carrying out such a bold robbery right under the nose of the owner of the box. Pete hardly seemed like a person who would undertake such a hazzard unless he felt pretty sure of his ultimate triumph. Discovery meant more than a mortifying exposure of his perfidy to the other members of the gang; it meant a swift relentless vengeance—and death.

"Here's the stunt," explained Pete, when the two men were again alone. "You pour the oil out of one lantern so it will burn out pretty soon."

"What's that going to do?"

"Keep yer trap closed long enough to hear, and you'll know," said Pete, brusquely.

Then he continued to outline his plan for lulling Moke's suspicions, until the two could make their escape.

"When the last load goes out of the hole one of us is to accidentally step on the other lantern to break the glass and smash the wick," said Pete. "Then yer see we won't have no glim."

The other man nodded comprehendingly, as things began to dawn upon him.

Pete continued. "Now, I'll carry one of these boxes what looks like the safe, and you take another."

"I see."

"You go ahead down the beach and tell them to shove off the boat, as I've got the last load."

"I git yer again."

"Now, then," said Pete. "I'll rush down and stow the box looking like the safe in the stern sheets and sit close to it till the boat's rowed into deep water."

Another nod from his acquiescent partner urged him on—if he needed any urging. "When you git in ther boat sit next to me. We'll git to argufying arter a while."

"What's that to lead up to?"

"Jist this: We'll suddenly have high words. You stand up and talk loud. First thing they'll all know we've got into a scrap. I'll yell for yer to let me alone, as something has fallen overboard. Of course, already they'll hear the splash."

"Your——"

"Hold on till I finish," demanded Pete. "I'll cry out 'My Gawd, the boss's safe hez pitched in ther water!' Yer git me, 'bo?"

"Haw, haw, do I?" exclaimed Pete's precious friend. "You're a wonder, and that's a fack."

Pete drew himself up and swelled out his chest, as if the plot were already carried out. But only for a second did he allow his head to sail up in the clouds. He was practical, and realized that the time was drawing near for the last box to be put aboard the boat. Still there was time to answer another of Dick's questions.

"Why, after the fracas is over, with the captain's cussing and dragging the sea bottom for days, to recover his precious box, you and me will jist quietly, leave the beggar to cry his eyes out with mortification over his loss. In the dark of the moon we'll sneak back here, git the box, and then beat it for parts unknown."

"It looks good to me," said the other man. "But say, when daylight comes any one can see the box if he happens to pass near them bushes."

"That's right; I ain't forgettin' it; and I was jist goin' to say you will have time to dig a hole quick and cover it up."

Indeed, this was quite possible. Pete

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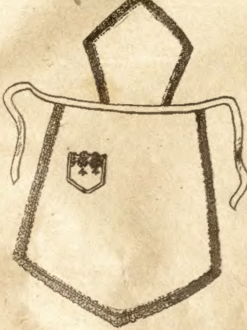

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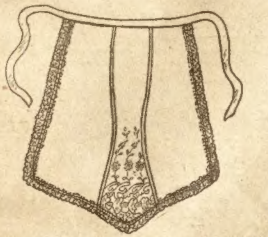

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had calculated his time to a nicety, and allowed for Dick's digging the extra hole for concealing the stolen fortune of their chief.

To drown the sound of the other's digging, Pete set up a great whistling. One of the smugglers coming up just then took him to task, but Pete satisfied him of its harmlessness.

"No one can hear, and it helps a feller at his work," he said. "I'm like the gink I read about in a book onct, who always gets more done when he sings—only my singer gits the effect by whistlin'—see?"

The curious person "saw" and left Pete alone after this explanation. Presently the hole was dug and the box in the bushes neatly covered with earth from prying eyes. But under the circumstances it was a case of "love's labor lost."

Frank was impressed with what would happen before the two treacherous smugglers could get back for the loot, and he gave vent to the sentiment quoted above.

"Pity so much industry is going to waste," he said, with mild sarcasm, to his friend. "Won't those two precious rascals be surprised to find that the box has disappeared, when they come back for it in a few days?"

Tom grinned in the darkness, and wished to laugh at the top of his voice. But he suppressed such an unwise inclination. After Dick came back from his pleasant task, he picked up the extra lantern and surreptitiously poured out the oil. Presently the light went out and the rest of the men saw that it had simply burned out from lack of fuel. Then, as the last boxes were carried off to the boat, according to Pete's plan, his partner accidentally stepped on the remaining lantern.

"What's the matter?" asked Moke from the beach. The explanation he received satisfied him, but he could not help uttering an imprecation on the luck which had put two—the only ones they had taken along—lanterns out at such a time. As the moon was still hidden, the captain saw only the outline of the box under Pete's arm. It looked like his safe, and he asked for confirmation.

"Yes," answered Pete; "and knowin' how precious it is and the store yer put on it, Captain, I'm being very careful. Indeed, I'm as careful as if it was my own." This last was said with his tongue to his cheek. But as Pete had been careful not to speak in anything but a colorless tone, his sarcasm was lost on everybody except Dick.

"Bold devils!" commented Tom. "And, do you know, I believe those two would carry out their plot successfully if there hadn't been any one overhearing their scheme."

"Yes; I'm sure of it," replied Frank. "And lucky for us that we tracked them all down here tonight."

"It seems as if Providence is fighting on the side of justice," said Blakely.

"It generally does, sooner or later," said Frank, reverently.

By this time all the smugglers were in the boat. Frank and Tom waited until sure that it had been shoved off from the beach.

"Say, let's go as near the water as we dare," said Frank. "And to tell the truth, it's just curiosity."

"Yes? To what extent?"

"I want to hear how that scalawag, Pete, and his bright friend carry out the part of the plot in the boat."

"All right, I'd like to know myself."

Whereupon they left their hiding-place and went to the water's edge.

They heard it all. Pete hardly waited to reach deep water, in his anxiety. There was a splash plainly heard on shore, after their ears had been greeted by the sounds of the two conspirators in a pretended wrangle. Then the boat stopped, and Moke was heard asking explanations. On learning what went overboard he nearly had a fit, his wrath was so great. He started to jump to the stern sheets, bent on wreaking vengeance. But the rest of the men, confident that it was wholly an accident, put restraining hands on their leader and held him until he became calmer.

The continuation of this highly interesting story will be found in the Ledger issue of next week. Read it. If you are not a regular subscriber to the Ledger we would like to have your name on our list. The Ledger is only $1.00 per year.

* * *

Front Seats.

It was in a suburban inn on one of the near-zero nights last winter, and a glorious fire was roaring up the chimney from the open fireplace. A half-dozen men were preempting the space in front of the blaze and it happened that all were lawyers. A physician came in, shivering. He knew the lawyers, but not one offered him a chance at the fire. One of them said:

"Doctor, we were just talking about foreign parts. I was remarking to my friends that you had probably seen as much of the world as any man in Essex County."

"Well, yes," said the doctor. "I have been in every country of Europe, in China, Japan, Egypt—pretty much everywhere anybody goes."

"Ever been in Hades?" put in a facetious limb of the law.

"Oh, yes."

"How did you find things there?"

"Well, pretty much the same as here—all the lawyers close to the fire."

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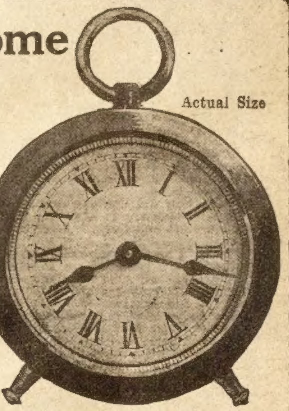

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◆

Jumps.

There was once a little light green grasshopper who never kept still for more than five minutes at a time, and his mother said to him:

"Sebastian"—his name was Sebastian—"I really do believe if I didn't pin the cover down with safety pins when I put you to bed you'd be jumping all over the world in your sleep."

Now, Sebastian did not say anything when his mother spoke to him. He just waved his feelers and thought after this fashion:

"No wonder I have uncomfortable and crowded dreams. Wrapped up in that way. No more safety pins for me!"

That night, after his mother had seen him safely in bed, he crawled out of the covers and unfastened every single one of those pins! Then that naughty grasshopper jumped back into bed again and put his head on the pillow, and in two minutes he was fast asleep. When he had been asleep three minutes—that made it five minutes from the time he jumped into bed—the time came for him to jump again. So he jumped a great big jump that jumped him 'way out of bed, out of the window and on to the middle of the lawn, and it never woke him up at all! He jumped and he jumped till he jumped right away beyond the lawn out into the thick forest. Away he went over sticks and stones, still fast asleep, till suddenly he jumped "crash" right into the end of the fairy queen's banquet table.

His weight was so great compared with fairy things that it tilted the table 'way up in the air, like a seesaw, and all the plates and dishes slid off on to the ground. "Crash!" went the fairy goblets; "Rip!" went the fairy tablecloth (it was only a spider web whitened with dewdrops); "Bang!" went the fairy platters, and all the fairies rose in a flutter of alarm and cried out "My goodness, gracious me! Whatever is the matter?"

This noise and commotion woke Sebastian, and he sat up in the middle of the wreck of the banquet and rubbed his eyes with his feelers and wondered wherever he was.

The fairy queen looked at him severely.

"I was jumping in my sleep!" said the little grasshopper to the queen, "and if you've anything to say to me you'll have to say it quick, because in five minutes I'll have to jump again."

"Don't you like to jump?" asked the queen of the fairies quickly.

"Not all the time," replied Sebastian, as fast as he could. "But I feel another jump coming on. Somebody hold on to me, quick."

So the fairies wrapped him up tight in what was left of the tablecloth.

"I'll turn you into a frog," said the fairy queen. "Then you won't have to jump if you don't want to."

So she waved her wand, and there before her instead of the little green grasshopper was a little green frog. "Now go home," said the fairy queen.

So Sebastian thanked her and hopped off as fast as he could, till he came to his own house and his own bed.

When Sebastian's mother came to wake him up in the morning, she was the most astonished lady grasshopper on the lawn. But when she found that he had recovered from the jumps and could sit as still as a stone for hours together she was quite delighted that her son had been turned into a frog.

◆

A Psychopathic Case.

Psychopathic cases (pronounced sey-kopathic, unless you want to get laughed at) are cases that have to do with a disorder of the intellect. They are doctors' cases, not book cases, though it is true enough that many book cases contain many disorders of the brain. The doctors that treat such cases are called alienists, and it was for the lack of an alienist that Boston & Maine engine No. 1339 got into trouble. The engine went crazy all of a sudden, and there was a fine mixup before it could be put under restraint. If the railroad company had had a competent physician to look after its engines the trouble might never have happened.

The engine was standing quietly in the roundhouse when, all of a sudden, it started out the door. It had steam up, but even with a high pressure of steam a locomotive does not ordinarily start out for a ramble all by itself. It may have been laboring under high emotion. It may have hated the other engine on the track with a deadly hate. That would be one explanation. The other engine was not far distant, and it was standing quietly and unsuspectingly, waiting for its engineer to give it a drink of water. No. 1339 ran into the other and knocked it over, and then it got scared—No. 1339 did. It saw what it had done, and it felt like a small boy who has tipped over a barrel of apples into the street. It just reversed itself like a Supreme Court, and ran back into the roundhouse, but it was too nervous to see where it was going. It ran straight into the farther wall and out into the daylight again, which was foolish, since the track stopped at the wall. The engine stuck its nose in the little water course that flows just outside, and it might have drowned if the wrecking crew had not come to its help.

◆

A Difference.

"Don't cry, dear," said the kind gentleman to the little boy who was leaning against the pasture fence and alternately kicking at the gate and squalling. "Look at the little calf. It never cries."

The weeping youngster gave the gate another kick.

"That's all right," he said. "It doesn't hurt the calf when its mother licks it."

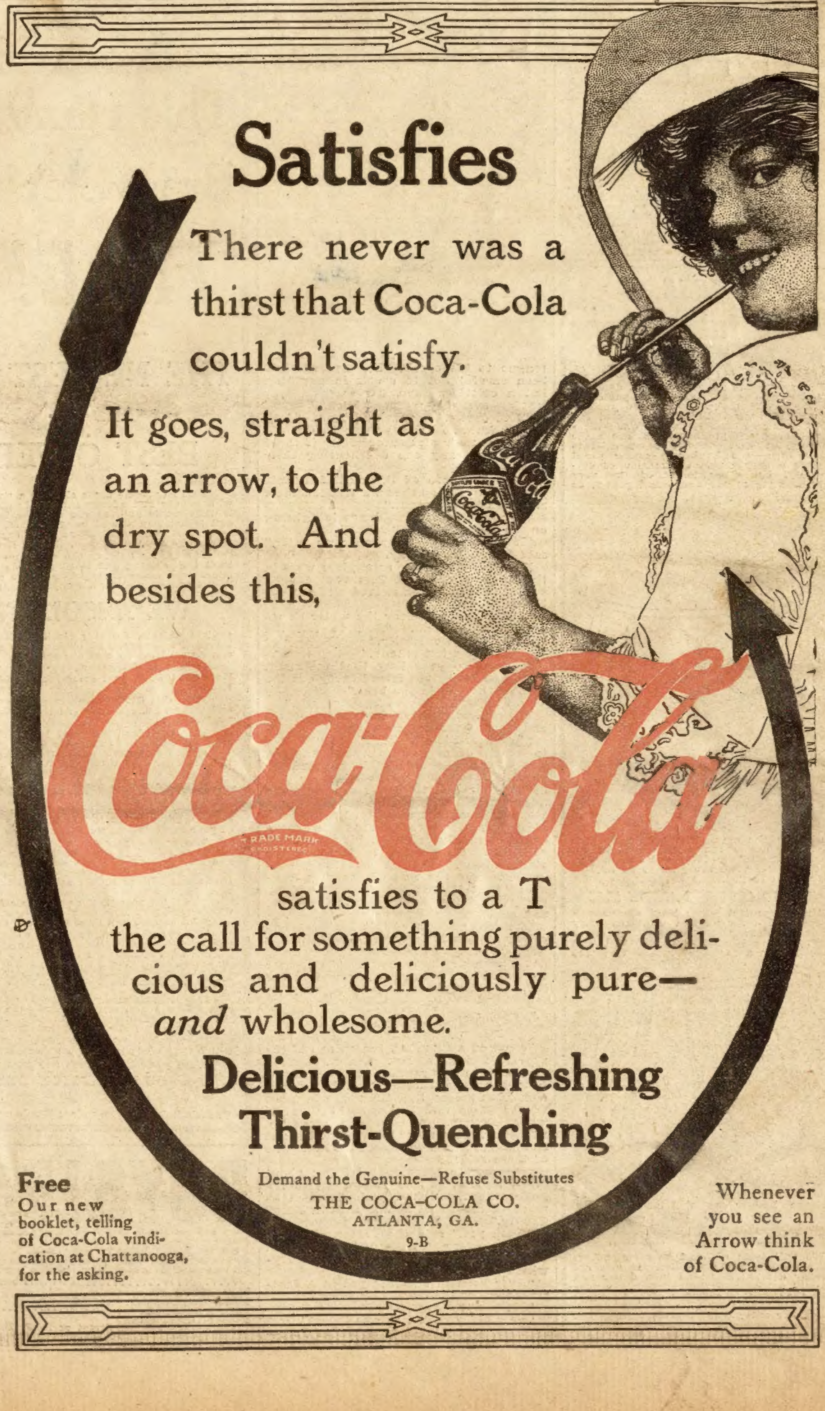
◆

CONTENTMENT.

I love the warmth of summer time
  And chilly winter weather
And all the spring and autumn, too.
  Sometimes I wonder whether
It wouldn't be a lot of fun
  To have them all together.

◆

It's what you are doing now that counts; not what you are going to do.


Satisfies

There never was a thirst that Coca-Cola couldn't satisfy.

It goes, straight as an arrow, to the dry spot. And besides this,

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satisfies to a T the call for something purely delicious and deliciously pure—*and* wholesome.

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Whenever you see an Arrow think of Coca-Cola.